DC
GRAYSON
VOLUME 5
SPIRAL'S END
"Thrilling, and sexy."
THE A.V. CLUB
TIM SEELEY TOM KING JACKSON LANZING
COLLIN KELLY ROGE ANTONIO

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GRAYSON VOLUME 5: SPIRAL'S END

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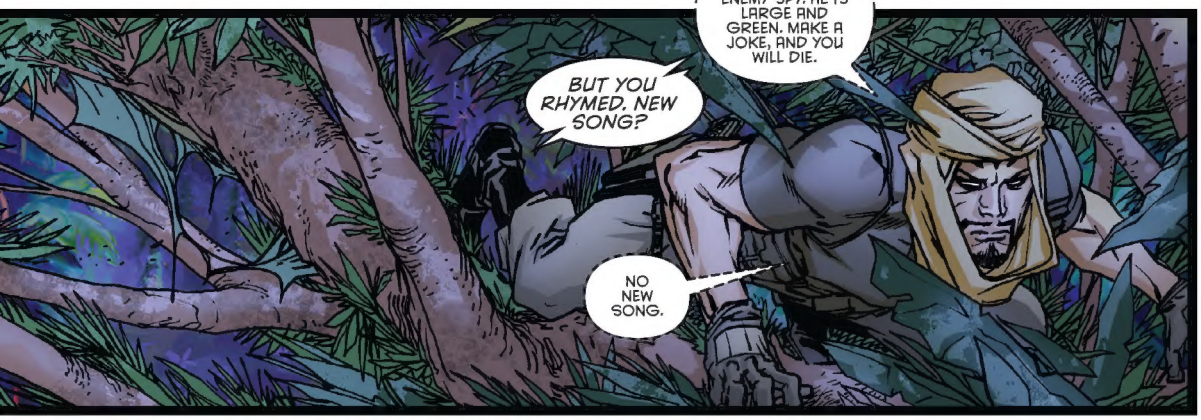
JASON
2015

I MISS TALKING TO THE OTHERS. FARADAY. BRONZE TIGER.
EVEN FRANKENSTEIN.
SYNDICATE SAFE HOUSE.
UNDISCLOSED LOCATION.
YOU DON'T TALK TO ANYONE BUT ME ANYMORE, TAO. NOT DIRECTLY. YOU LIKE TO TAKE THINGS APART A LITTLE TOO MUCH. EVEN FOR THE SYNDICATE.
NOW, SPYRAL'S HELENA BERTINELLI ASKED FOR THE OUR ASSISTANCE...
SHE'S GOT TWO ROGUE AGENTS, INTERRUPTING AND DEMOLISHING HER AGENCY'S MISSIONS.
SPYRAL'S NEVER BEEN PARTICULARLY STABLE. AND BERTINELLI'S A LOOSE CANNON AT BEST.
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT SHE'S GOING TO DO NEXT.
AND FOR THAT I NEED YOUR HELP.
PERHAPS SOMEDAY I'LL "HELP" YOU, GRIFTER.
KEEP DREAMIN', YA LITTLE TEST TUBE TURD.
I'M A TELEPATH. YOUR GAMES DON'T WORK ON ME, WHICH IS WHY I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO EVER COMES TO SEE YOU ANYMORE.
THIS IS EVERYTHING WE HAVE ON THE SUBJECT. PUT THE PUZZLE TOGETHER, AND GIVE ME A WORKABLE PROFILE AND RECOMMENDATION BY MORNING.
OF COURSE, GRIFTER. YOU KNOW ME. I CAN NEVER RESIST A PUZZLE.
HELENA BERTINELLI. PAINT ME A PICTURE.

"SHOW ME WHAT KIND OF *MONSTER* YOU ARE."
LA MOSQUITIA. HONDURAS.


I HAVE EYES ON THE ENEMY SPY. HE IS LARGE AND GREEN. MAKE A JOKE, AND YOU WILL DIE.
BUT YOU RHYMED. NEW SONG?
NO NEW SONG.

BWEEOOOWW

CHREE
CHREE
CHREE
CHREE
CHREE
CHREE

Hrm. HE STOPPED. HE FOLLOWED US ALL THE WAY TO A DEAD CITY DEDICATED TO A MONKEY DEITY AND HE STOPPED.
HE'S THINKING. PERHAPS THESE "SHADOW AGENTS" HELENA SENT WILL LIVE UP TO THEIR REPUTATIONS.
CHREE
CHREE
CHREE
CHREE
CHREE
CHREE
AND OFFER US A REAL--
AHHHH!
TIGER? AGENT 1?
CHREE CHREE CHREE
PLEASE TELL ME THAT'S JUST THE SOUND OF YOU WATCHING AN ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS MOVIE!
AGAIN.

-Sigh-
THEY'RE SPIES WHO DO MORE THAN JUST SPYYYY. SOMETIMES THEY SWING THROUGH THE SKYYY...
YA DAHWETY!
ALLAH DELIVER ME FROM THESE DAMNED THINGS!
I THANK YOU, ELDER CHILDREN--
--FOR COMING TO MY AID. NOW, RETURN TO YOUR SLUMBER.
I SHALL HANDLE THIS FROM HERE ON OUT.
WHUNCH!
...THEY ALSO KICK FRANKENSTEEEIIIINS.
OOF!

-Whuff-
FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, MAN OF SPYRAL, I DO BLAME MATRON BERTINELLI FOR YOUR BEHAVIOR. IN YOU, SHE CREATED HER OWN MONSTER.
CLK
TRUST ME, I AM SOMEWHAT OF AN EXPERT.
-Ungh- YOU'RE RIGHT, MAN...
I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT.
HALLELUJAH.
YOU CAN TAKE THE SPY OUT OF THE SHADOW...
WRITER TIM SEELEY PLOT BY TIM SEELEY & TOM KING
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C'MON, TIGER! I CAN'T DO THIS ALONE! THIS GUY IS *PARAGON-LEVEL!*
KRAKOOM
QUIT WASTING TIME WITH THE INFANTRY! POWER UP!
Rrrrr.
BUT IT SEEMS LIKE SUCH A *CHEAT.*
SPAK
KEEP PUSHING HIM BACK!
CHTOOM
THIS... TECHNOLOGY. I HAVE...SEEN IT BEFORE!
BLOOM

DID YOU STEAL IT?!
CHOW
OR IS THIS YET ANOTHER BE...
...TRAY...
...ULLLLL.
I ADMIT INITIAL SKEPTICISM AT THIS PLAN.
HE'S *FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER.* IN THE BOOK, IT'S THE *COLD* THAT GETS HIM IN THE END.
Hmm. AND WHAT IS THIS STRANGE BEAST THAT OBEYED HIS COMMANDS?
HALF-MONKEY, HALF-CTHULHU. *MONKTHULHU,* OBVIOUSLY.
YOU ARE FAR TOO USED TO THIS KIND OF THING, *DICK GRAYSON.*
I SEE OUR *"AMBIENT TECH"* PERFORMED ADEQUATELY.
BUT THEN, DISAPPOINTMENTS AND MISTAKES ARE REALLY MORE OF A *SPYRAL* THING...

AND THIS IS CHECKMATE.
NOW, PLEASE GIVE BACK OUR EQUIPMENT. LOANERS ONLY.

MISTER FRANKENSTEIN. S.H.A.D.E AND CHECKMATE DO HAVE SUCH A STORIED PAST. IT'D BE A SHAME NOT TO AT LEAST FIND OUT HOW YOU WORK...
NO. YOU'RE TO HOLD HIM ONLY.

FORTY-EIGHT HOURS, AND THEN YOU LET HIM GO, LORD.
YOU WANT SPYRAL, YOU DO THE DEAL.

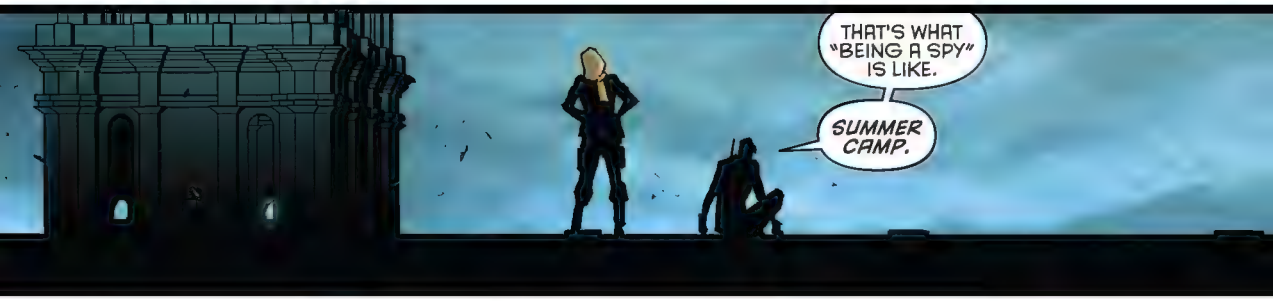
I'M GETTING THE DISTINCT SENSE THAT YOU DON'T LIKE ME ONE BIT, AGENT 37.

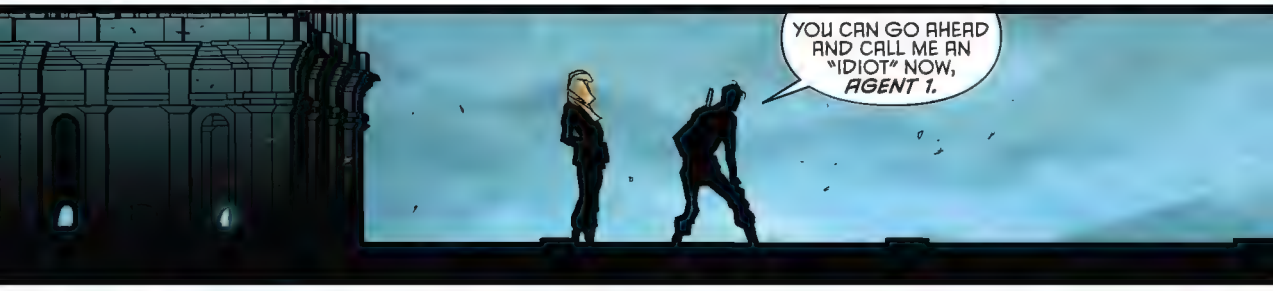
YEAH, WELL, YOU *FRAMED* ME FOR THE DEATHS OF A BUNCH OF SPIES.
DID I? I'M SO BUSY KEEPING THE WORLD SAFE, I FORGET SOMETIMES.
GOOD THING I HAVE OTHER AGENTS TO KEEP TRACK OF IT ALL.
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO RUNNING THE *OFFICIALLY SANCTIONED* U.N. INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WITHOUT THE CONSTANT BOTHER OF A MORALLY REPUGNANT *UPSTART* MUCKING UP THE WORKS.
WELL... *MORE* MORALLY REPUGNANT.
I'LL HONOR MY END OF THE DEAL. FORTY-EIGHT HOURS, AND I'LL THAW OUT THE CORPSE.
I'D GET GOING IF I WERE YOU. HE'S NOT GOING TO BE A HAPPY GOLEM.
IT'S BEEN A PLEASURE, AGENTS. AS WE SAY AROUND THE OFFICE...
YOUR MOVE.

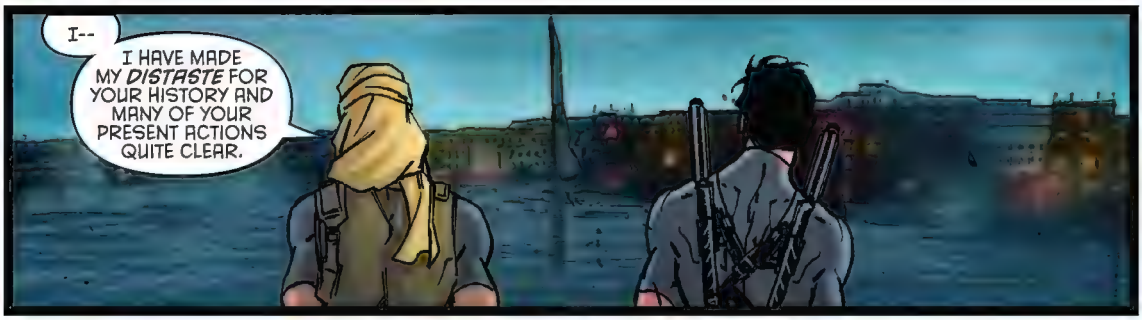
SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL.
GOOD MORNING, SUN.
YOU KNOW, IN CHINESE MYTH, THE GREAT HERO *YI* HAD TO SHOOT DOWN NINE OF THE TEN SUNS.
YES. *TEN* SUNS. YOU SEE, THE SUNS USED TO TAKE TURNS, BUT THEN THEY GREW *REBELLIOUS*, AND DECIDED TO SHINE AT THE SAME TIME. ALL TEN.
IT WAS THE EPITOME OF *TOO MUCH* OF A GOOD THING. BUT THANKS TO YI, WE NOW ONLY HAVE *ONE* SUN. AND IT CAN'T SHINE ALL THE TIME.
DO YOU FANCY YOURSELF A BIT OF A "YI," GRIFTER?
SAVE THE STORIES FOR BEDTIME. RECOMMENDATION?
A FASCINATING WOMAN, THIS *HELENA BERTINELLI.* A STUDY IN CONTRADICTIONS, ALWAYS IMMERSING HERSELF IN WHAT SHE HATES--
A *WHITE CROSS* IN A *BLACK FIELD.*

VOICE COMMAND: CASH, COLE.
ACTIVATE SECURITY MEASURE OMEGA. DON'T EVER LET THAT LITTLE CREEP OUT. EVER.
BEEP BEEP
SEVERAL MINUTES LATER.
GRIFTER HERE.
IT'S FARADAY. SPYRAL TECH TRACKERS PUT AGENTS 1 AND 37 IN MEXICO CITY.
GOOD. KESHI AND I WILL KEEP THE BOYS BUSY.
WHAT'D OUR TACTICAL AUGMENTED ORGANISM HAVE TO SAY?
A LOT. EVEN WITH MY "BACKUP," THE LITTLE BASTARD STILL MAKES ME NERVOUS.
はあなたがパートナーとしてご参考にしていないことを憤慨しています。
HIS RECOMMENDATION... IT'S...
DON'T SAY IT, COLE.
YOU'VE NEVER HAD THE HEART FOR IT.

MEXICO CITY. ZÓCALO.
SUMMER CAMP.
WHAT?
WHEN I WAS A KID, BRUCE DECIDED TO SEND ME AWAY FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS IN THE SUMMER. HE'D BEEN AS A KID, AND FIGURED IT'D DO ME SOME GOOD. CAMP WHITE FAWN, IT WAS CALLED.
THERE WERE KIDS FROM ALL OVER. JERSEY CITY. NEW YORK. GOTHAM ACADEMY.
A BUNCH OF STRANGERS LUMPED TOGETHER IN TENTS AND CABINS TO BUILD BIRDHOUSES, PLAY TUG-O-WAR, AND SWAT MOSQUITOS.
AND THE WEIRD THING WAS, ALL OF THESE KIDS WHO STARTED OUT AS TOTAL STRANGERS BECAME FRIENDS, ENEMIES OR... "ROMANTICALLY INVOLVED," Heh...LIKE, RIGHT WAY.
IT HAPPENED SO FAST.
SOMETHING ABOUT EVERYONE STARTING FROM THE SAME PLACE...ALONE, EXCITED, SCARED, AND MISSING HOME...
IT MADE ALL THOSE RELATIONSHIPS SO MUCH MORE INTENSE.


THAT'S WHAT "BEING A SPY" IS LIKE.
SUMMER CAMP.


YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND CALL ME AN "IDIOT" NOW, AGENT 1.


I--
I HAVE MADE MY DISTASTE FOR YOUR HISTORY AND MANY OF YOUR PRESENT ACTIONS QUITE CLEAR.

BUT, KNOW THIS. AS I HAVE COME TO KNOW YOU, I HAVE HAD TO ADMIT TO MYSELF, THAT THOUGH I MAY NOT LIKE WORKING WITH YOU...
I DO, INDEED, LIKE--

--YOOOOF!
こんにちは!
KRAK

あなたは これらが右の男性であることを確認していますか？
TAKE IT FROM A GUY WHO USED TO HUNT INVISIBLE ALIENS...
BWONG
I KNOW A *TARGET* WHEN I SEE IT.
IF IT MAKES YA FEEL ANY BETTER, CHA-CHA, I LIKED THE STORY ABOUT *CAMP WHITE FAWN.*
NOW GO EASY, AND YOU AND YOUR BUDDY WILL BE SINGIN' "FATHER ABRAHAM" AROUND OUR STOCKADE COMMODE--
--INSTEADA FEEDIN' TEQUILA WORMS.
Oooh. GRAVELY VOICE. TOUGH GUY TALK.

NEVER HEARD THAT BEFORE!
I'VE BEEN AROUND, MAN. I KNOW GRIM 'N' GRUFF. AND I KNOW WHY FRANKENSTEIN CAME AFTER US.
HELENA CONVINCED HIM WE WERE ROGUES, AND THAT WAS GOOD ENOUGH.
HE'S OLD FASHIONED. LIKE EARLY 1800s OLD FASHIONED. I GET IT.
HNNH!
CRUNCH!
BUT I'VE NEVER HEARD OF YOU, RED HANKY.
HOW'D DIRECTOR BERTINELLI GET YOU BY THE FACE HANDKERCHIEF?

I WAS GETTING BORED OF SPYRAL AGENTS. THEY ARE ALL THE SAME. WEAK. EASY TO BEAT.
STOMP!
SO, HELENA HAS RESPONDED TO MY DESIRE TO FIGHT EVER MORE CHALLENGING AND FRIGHTENING OPPONENTS...
...WITH A STRANGE, PINK TOY THAT THROWS BACK MY OWN MIGHT AGAINST ME?!
KRAK!
GENIUS!
KRAK!

WHAT HAS BERTINELLI GOT ON *ME*? *THAT'S* WHAT YOU'RE ASKIN' YOURSELF?
PKOW
PKOW
PKOW
PKOW
WHAT ABOUT *YOU*? WHAT MAKES SOME KID THROW AWAY THE CLARITY OF YOUTH FOR THE CONFUSION AND DELUSION OF *SPYRAL*?
ME, I FIGURE, IT'S GOTTA BE HELENA *HERSELF*, RIGHT? I'VE FALLEN FOR THE TOUGH HIDE/SOFT LIPS COMBO IN MY DAY. I SYMPATHIZE.
YOU WERE PROBABLY SO WRAPPED UP IN THE IDEA OF GETTING LOST IN HER *SHEETS*...
...THAT YOU DIDN'T NOTICE SHE'D DRAWN YA RIGHT DOWN INTO THE *SPYDER'S WEB* WITH HER.
PKOW

I FELT THAT. IN MY *HEAD.* THE "BAD TOUCH" OF *TELEPATHY.*
YOU CAN *READ* MY THOUGHTS. TELEGRAPH WHERE I'LL ATTACK. *BLOCK* MY MOVES. YOU LIKE USING YOUR LITTLE "ADVANTAGE."
PKOW
YOU COULD STAND BACK AND GET THE JOB DONE FROM A DISTANCE, BUT YOU *LIKE* TO GET *PHYSICAL.*
YOU USE GUNS, BUT YOU HOLD THEM LIKE THEY'RE HEAVIER THAN THEY REALLY ARE. YOU DON'T *LIKE* TO KILL *PEOPLE.*
YOU TOOK THIS JOB, BECAUSE YOU WANTED A *SCRAP.* BUT NOT THE KIND THAT ENDS WITH THE GUILT OF A DEAD KID YOU THINK IS JUST CONFUSED AND DELUDED.
YOU'VE TOLD ME A LOT.

NOW TELL ME A LITTLE MORE.

AND THAT IS HOW YOU DEAL WITH A SIZE-CHANGING, RUBBER ENEMY. YOU WAIT UNTIL SHE IS THE SIZE OF A SOCCER BALL...
...AND PUNT HER INTO THE NEXT BLOCK.
SHALL I ALERT LORD THAT WE HAVE ANOTHER PICKUP--
GRAYSON?
HE RESISTED HYPNOS INTERROGATION. I PUSHED.
WE NEED TO GO. NOW.
THESE SYNDICATE GUYS KNOW ABOUT SPYDER. THEY KNOW ABOUT OTTO NETZ. EVERYTHING WE GOT FROM SPANDAU.
HELENA THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING AFTER US. BUT THEY WERE JUST KEEPING UP APPEARANCES. SPYRAL IS THE REAL TARGET.
NO?
THAT IS GOOD, YES? IT'S WHAT WE WANTED?
GRAYSON?

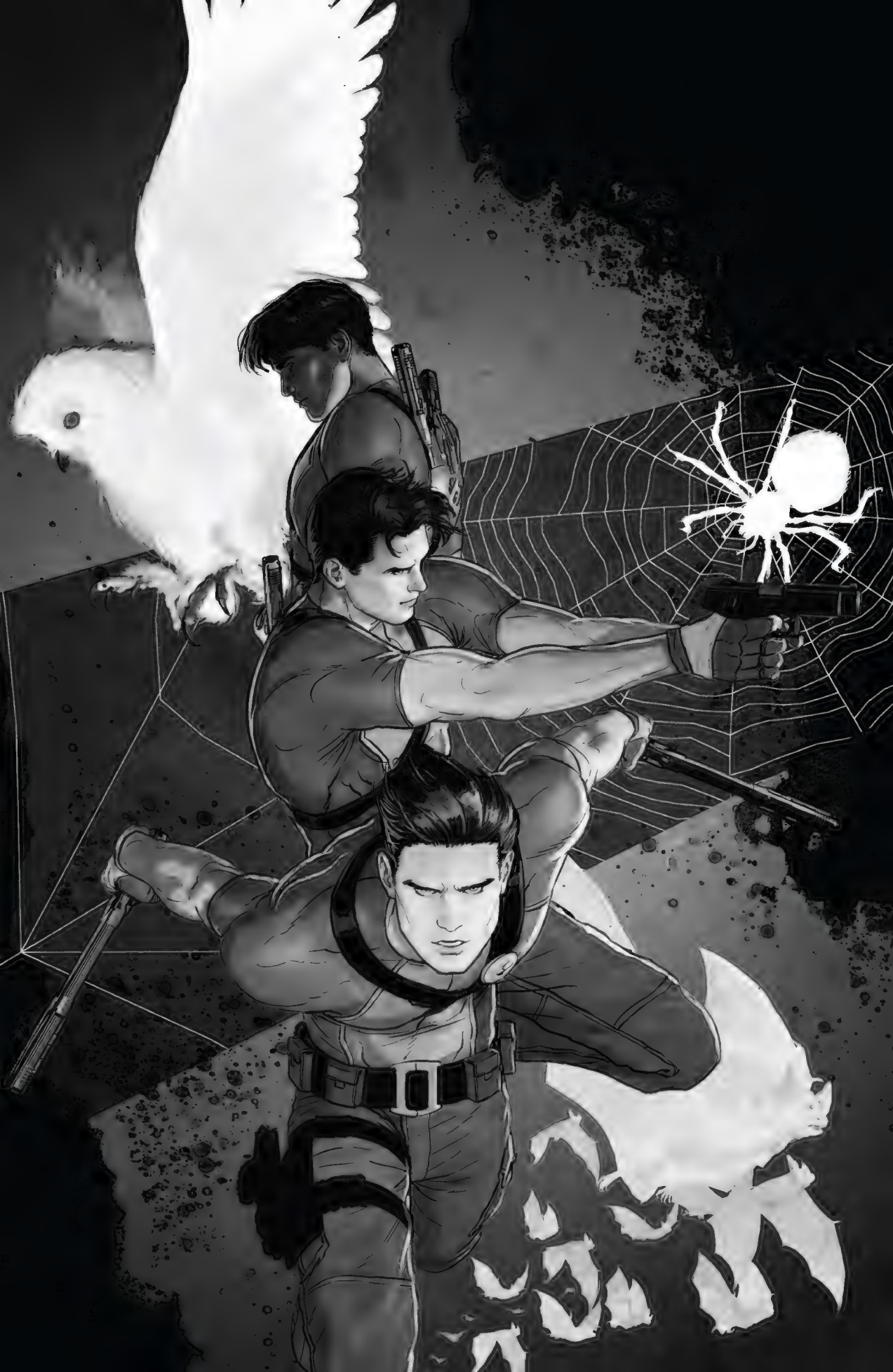
EARLIER.
YEAH, I KNOW WHAT SHE WEARS, TAO. WHAT DO I DO WITH HER?
HELENA BERTINELLI SPENT HER CHILDHOOD SURROUNDED BY CRUEL AND *EVIL MEN*, PRETENDING TO BE ONE OF THEM, SO SHE COULD HAVE HER REVENGE.

SHE BELIEVED THE *FAITH* TAUGHT TO HER BY HER FATHER WOULD ALLOW HER TO COME THROUGH HER JOURNEY UNSCATHED.

HELENA BERTINELLI ATTEMPTS TO CONTROL SPYRAL AS A MEANS OF CONVINCING HERSELF THAT *SECRETS* CAN BE PROTECTED.
THAT *EVIL* CAN BE NEUTERED.

BUT TOTAL IMMERSION HAS COST HER MANY SUNS. AND HER WORLD GROWS DARK.

Hmm. YES. I SEE IT IN YOUR EYES.
YOU DOUBT ME.
YOU MAY COMFORT YOURSELF WITH THIS, GRIFTER.
IF OTTO NETZ DESTROYS THE WORLD...
...THERE'LL BE NOTHING LEFT FOR ME TO TAKE APART.
YEAH. RIGHT. SO--
I BELIEVE THE SPYDER MAY ALREADY HAVE HER WRAPPED UP IN ITS THREADS.
IF YOU WON'T LET ME TALK TO HER, THEN THE SYNDICATE MUST STOP THE OUROBOROS FROM GOING ROUND AND ROUND, GRIFTER.
AND THE MOST EXPEDIENT WAY TO DO THAT?
KILL HELENA BERTINELLI.



OUT OF YOUR ROOMS, LADIES. THIS IS NOT A DRILL!
"HELENA. IT'S DICK.
"I BET YOU FORGOT I HAD THIS NUMBER. BUT I MEMORIZED IT, BECAUSE, YOU KNOW. SUPER SPY."
GIRLS! TO THE UNDERGROUND SHELTERS! SIEGE PROTOCOLS. SCHNELL, SCHNELL!
"I KNOW I'M NOT YOUR FAVORITE PERSON RIGHT NOW. IN FACT, I'M KINDA HOPING I'M SOMEWHERE NEAR THE TOP OF SPYRAL'S MOST WANTED."
ANY SIGN OF AGENTS 37 AND 1?
"BUT THE SYNDICATE YOU TURNED TO, LOOKING TO SHUT ME DOWN? THEY'RE COMING FOR YOU. NOT SPYRAL. NOT ME. YOU, HELENA. THEY'RE COMING TO KILL YOU."
NOT YET...
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER. THIS IS MY SCHOOL.
"PLEASE...
"...DON'T LET THEM."
AND I'M READY TO TEACH.

HSSSSSSSS

GWISIN!

SPRANG

KIND OF THEM TO SEND A DEAD WOMAN TO *DIE.*

PKOW

PKOW

PKOW

YOU MISUNDERSTAND, MATRON BERTINELLI.

OUR ONLY *KINDNESS* WILL BE *MAKING THIS QUICK.*

KING FARADAY? GANG'S ALL HERE, *huh?*

EXECUTE OMEGA ATTACK ON MY MARK.

SORRY, HELENA.

GRIFTER!

KESHI!

直撃.

AND FOR THE FINISHER...

...BRONZE TIGER!

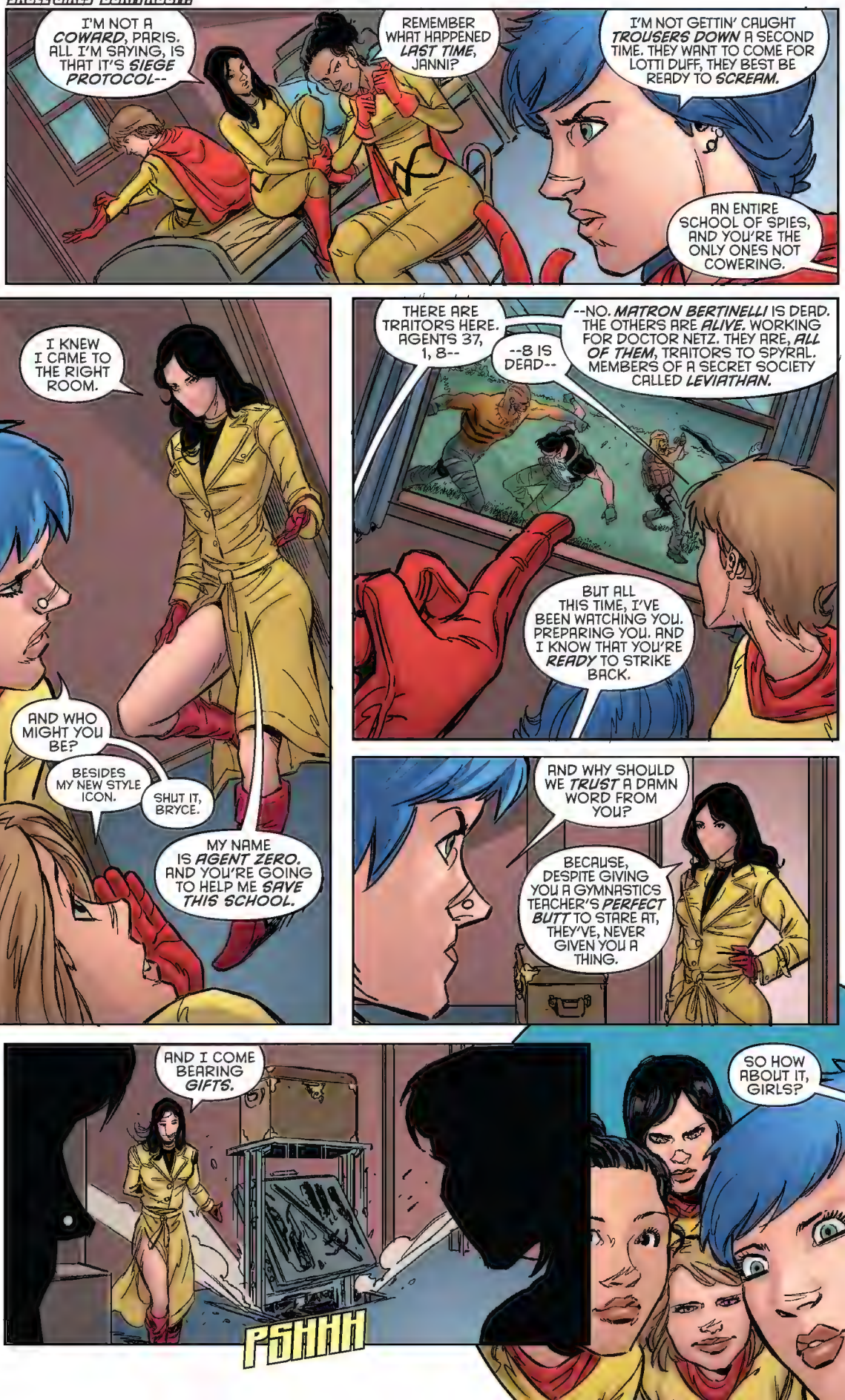
THIS DAY IS ONE FOR THE *SECRET HISTORY* BOOKS.

SPYRAL, OTTO NETZ, AND THE FUTURE OF THE BERTINELLI CRIME FAMILY, ALL NEUTRALIZED IN A SINGLE MOMENT.

OH, SORRY, WERE YOU *STILL GLOATING?*

KAPOW

BECAUSE THE FIGHT ISN'T OVER YET!
WE'RE TOO LATE, GRAYSON!
WE'RE REALLY NOT, TIGER! SHE'S STILL BREATHING!
CRACK
DOCTOR NETZ! GET HELENA TO MEDICAL!
BUT--THE GIRLS--
NEED THEIR MATRON IF THEY'RE GOING TO SURVIVE.
ESPECIALLY SINCE MY PARTNER AND I ARE A LITTLE BIT--
I'LL RIP YOUR HEAD OFF!
--PREOCCUPIED.
PKOW PKOW
IDIOT, WE CAN'T WIN THIS. WE NEED TO RETREAT!
NOT GONNA HAPPEN, MY FELINE FRIEND.
WISECRACKS DON'T CRACK HEADS, GRAYSON. WE CAN'T WIN THIS FIGHT!
SO WE FIGHT HARDER.


SKULL GIRLS' DORM ROOM.
I'M NOT A COWARD, PARIS. ALL I'M SAYING, IS THAT IT'S SIEGE PROTOCOL--
REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME, JANNI?
I'M NOT GETTIN' CAUGHT TROUSERS DOWN A SECOND TIME. THEY WANT TO COME FOR LOTTI DUFF, THEY BEST BE READY TO SCREAM.
AN ENTIRE SCHOOL OF SPIES, AND YOU'RE THE ONLY ONES NOT COWERING.
I KNEW I CAME TO THE RIGHT ROOM.
AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE?
BESIDES MY NEW STYLE ICON.
SHUT IT, BRYCE.
MY NAME IS AGENT ZERO. AND YOU'RE GOING TO HELP ME SAVE THIS SCHOOL.
THERE ARE TRAITORS HERE. AGENTS 37, 1, 8--
--8 IS DEAD--
--NO. MATRON BERTINELLI IS DEAD. THE OTHERS ARE ALIVE. WORKING FOR DOCTOR NETZ. THEY ARE, ALL OF THEM, TRAITORS TO SPYRAL. MEMBERS OF A SECRET SOCIETY CALLED LEVIATHAN.
BUT ALL THIS TIME, I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU. PREPARING YOU. AND I KNOW THAT YOU'RE READY TO STRIKE BACK.
AND WHY SHOULD WE TRUST A DAMN WORD FROM YOU?
BECAUSE, DESPITE GIVING YOU A GYMNASTICS TEACHER'S PERFECT BUTT TO STARE AT, THEY'VE, NEVER GIVEN YOU A THING.
AND I COME BEARING GIFTS.
PSHHH
SO HOW ABOUT IT, GIRLS?

"WOULD YOU LIKE TO GRADUATE?"

DIRECTOR. *HELENA.* YOU'VE GOT TO FIGHT, MY *LIEBLING.*

I CAN *FIX YOU*, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO BE STRONG. YOU'VE GOT TO BE AS STUBBORN AS I KNOW YOU CAN BE.

NEIN! HELENA!

SHKT

THE MATRON HAS RETURNED TO THE WOMB.

SHE'LL DIE WITHOUT SURGERY!

AND THE SPYDER CAN PROVIDE. YOU ARE NOT THE ONLY HEALER WITHIN THIS WEB.

BUT THE DOCTOR IS NOT JUST A HEALER. LIFE AND DEATH, SHE HOLDS IN HAND. THROUGH HER CHOICES, THROUGH HER ACTIONS, SHE CAN BE STRONG.

THE DAUGHTER OF NETZ CAN SIT AT THE SPYRAL'S CENTER.

AND HE IS READY FOR YOU TO ASCEND.

AND WELCOME HER FATHER HOME.

MY *FATHER...*

HE ALWAYS SAID THAT ONE DAY HE WOULD COME BACK TO US. THAT HE'D CHOOSE ONE OF US AS HIS VESSEL. THAT WE'D BECOME *DAEDALUS.* BUT HIS MIND WAS RIDDLED WITH SICKNESS. DELUSION.

MY FATHER IS *DEAD.*

YOUR BELIEF MAY HAVE WAVERED.

HIS HAS NOT.

AGENT 8, IT'S ME.

I'M *TAKING COMMAND* OF SPYRAL. THE AWAKENING IS HAPPENING SOONER THAN EXPECTED. ENGAGE THE *ATTACKERS.* THE SPIES. THE TRAITORS. DELAY THEM.

"I NEED TIME ALONE WITH MY *SISTER.*"

OUTNUMBERED. OUTCLASSED. WHERE'S YOUR SILLY *SONG* NOW, 37?

I GOT A *NEW* ONE. NO LYRICS THIS TIME.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE *BEAT.*

TIGER, IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO SHOW YOUR TRUE *STRIPES.*

PLEASE, NO. FOR ONCE, LET ME JUST *FIGHT* WITHOUT THE BURDEN OF PUNS.

PKOW

PKOW

PKOW

SPRANG

SPRANG

SPRANG

TWO DAYS AGO, YOU WERE TAKING SPYRAL APART!

WE WANT THE SAME THING, 37!

WE WANT TO TAKE DOWN SPYRAL, FARADAY. *YOU* WANT TO KILL MY FRIEND.

あなたの友人は死んでいます。.

HAH, THAT'S A SWEET OFFER, PINKY! BUT THE ANSWER IS STILL *NO.* SEE...

...I'M ALREADY PART OF A *TEAM-UP.*

THIS IS GETTING ABSURD, GRAYSON. YOU'RE ONLY DELAYING THE INEVITABLE. GIVE UP. WALK AWAY FROM THIS.
BUT LEAVE YOUR PARTNER. I OWE HIM CLAWS.
GROWING TIRED OF BEING MISTAKEN FOR ME, BRONZE TIGER? I UNDERSTAND.
PERSONALLY, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN IMPRESSED THAT YOU WERE SO HONEST. NEXT TO ME AND, I SUPPOSED, THE CEREAL CARTOON, YOU REALLY ARE THE THIRD BEST TIGER AROUND.
GOD, YES, FINALLY.
THAT IS SOME GRADE-A TRASH TALK.
SO YOU KNOW MY NAME. WHICH MEANS YOU KNOW MY TRAINING. MY RESOURCES.
BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW FAR I'LL GO TO PROTECT HELENA.
DICK GRAYSON DOESN'T KILL.
HE'S BEEN TAKING LESSONS.
WE'RE WASTING TIME, THESE TWO ARE NOT OUR TARGETS.
ONE TWITCH FROM ME, THEY'LL BE DEAD BETWEEN BLINKS.
IF YOU'RE SO CONFIDENT, TAKE THE SHOT. I GUARANTEE YOU'LL MISS.
GO AHEAD, MISTER PSYCHIC.
TELL ME HE'S LYING.

YOU MIGHT CALL YOURSELF "AGENT," BUT WE ALL KNOW WHAT YOU ARE.
PKOW
PKOW
VILLAINS MIGHT QUIVER TO HEAR YOUR PLUCKY MONOLOGUE.
BUT WE'RE NOT VILLAINS.
SLICE
WE'RE THE LAST STAND AGAINST CHAOS.
WE'RE THE SPIES WHO WILL SAVE THE WORLD.
SAVE ME YOUR SELF-CONGRATULATIONS. IF YOU THINK THIS WORLD CAN BE SAVED JUST BY KILLING HELENA BERTINELLI...
PKOW

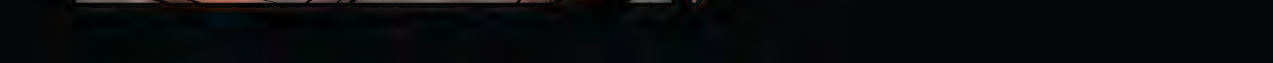
"...THEN YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW DEEP THE SPIRAL TRULY GOES."
I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW LONG I'VE WAITED FOR THIS DAY.
THE END OF THE *RUSE*, WHEN WE CAN ALL TAKE OFF OUR SILLY MASKS AND *EMBRACE* THE *TRUE NATURE* OF THE WORLD.
HONESTLY, *AGENT 8*...
...WE RATHER *LIKE* OUR MASKS.
THEY MATCH OUR *DISPOSITION*.
AND OUR *MISSION*. YOU *LEVIATHAN* ASSES WANT TO COME TO OUR *HOME* AND STIR UP TROUBLE?
THEN YOU MUST'VE FORGOTTEN WHO *LIVES HERE*. WE'RE THE *SKULL GIRLS*...
...AND WE'RE THE LAST THING YOU'LL EVER SEE!
YOU CONFUSED, FLAILING CHILDREN. WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW WHAT YOU *REALLY* ARE?
CORPSES.
CLICK

THOOOOOM!
HOLY--
THIS ISN'T THE BLACK KNIGHT, YOU PSYCHOPATHS! THOSE BUILDINGS ARE FILLED WITH INNOCENT KIDS!
NO ONE IS INNOCENT, GRAYSON, LEAST OF ALL THE MISERABLE STUDENTS OF THIS SCHOOL FOR ASSASSINS.
NEVERTHELESS, WE HAVE ONLY ONE TARGET.
WHOEVER CAUSED THAT EXPLOSION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH--
SAVE IT, FARADAY. I'M SICK OF LIES.
FWIP
NO, GRAYSON.
HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH.
LOOK.
IT'S HER.

"AGENT 8..."
BUT...
...I SAW HER DIE.
YOU SAW WHAT SHE WANTED YOU TO SEE.
YOU SHOULD KNOW BY NOW, IN OUR WORLD...
...THE TRUTH IS THE MOST COMPLICATED LIE OF ALL.
I WARN YOU NOW, GRAYSON. STAY OUT OF THIS FIGHT. SHE'S MINE.
AND LEAVE THOSE GIRLS IN THE CROSSFIRE? NOT A CHANCE, TONY THE TERRIBLE.
私と戦います！
THE BOUNCING PINK NINJA IS RIGHT. ONE OF US MUST STAY AND FINISH THIS FIGHT.
NEITHER OF US STAND A CHANCE ALONE, TIGER.
BUT I DO KNOW A GUY.
MISTER FIGHT...
...I GOT YOU ONE HELL OF A PRESENT.
YOU KNOW, DICK, I'M NOT A VERY ROMANTIC GUY...

...BUT I COULD *KISS* YOU RIGHT NOW.
HAVE FUN, *MIDNIGHTER.*
OH.
NO.
OH.
YES.

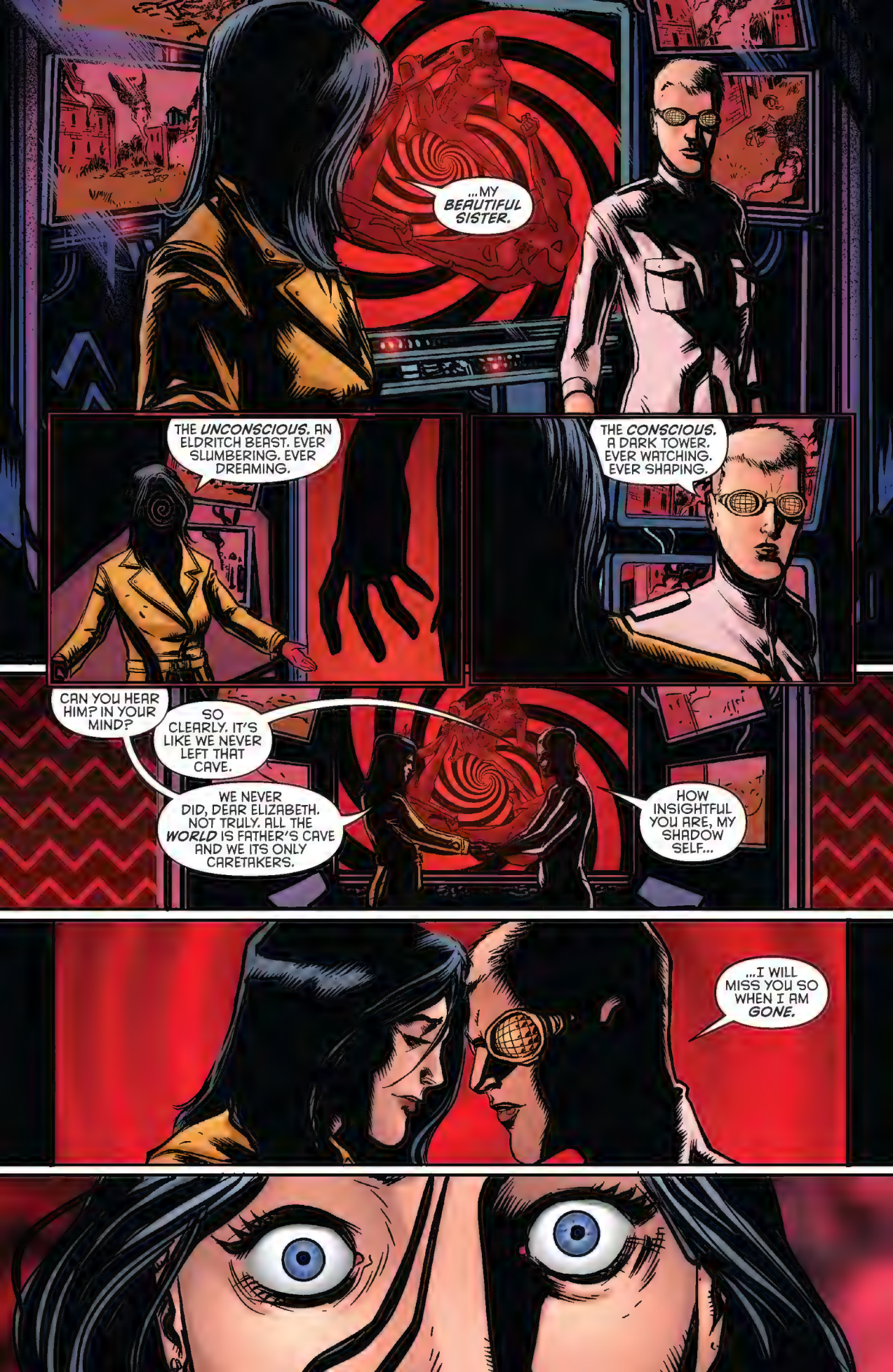
GIRLS, SERIOUSLY, WHAT PART OF *LOCKDOWN* DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND?
THE PART WHERE YA GET A SAY IN WHEN WE *FIGHT...*
...YE *TRAITOR!*

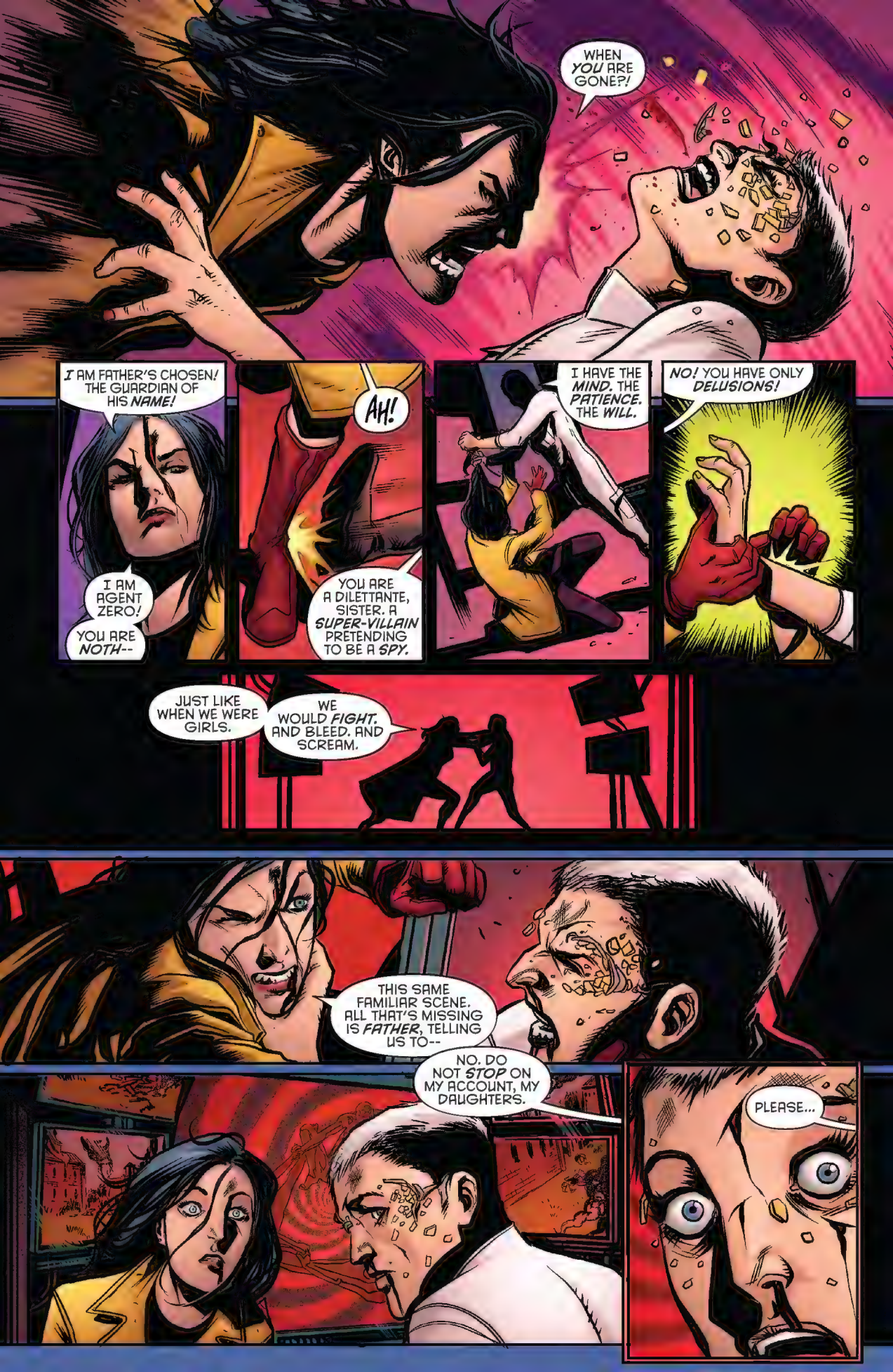

ALIA. YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE RETURNED.
OH, MY *TIGER.* I NEVER *LEFT.*
YOU WERE JUST TOO *BLIND* TO SEE.

YOU KILLED MATRON! NOW AGENT ZERO SAYS GOODBYE!
AGENT--YOU'VE BEEN TALKING TO AGENT ZERO? NO WONDER THERE'S BEEN AN OUTBREAK OF CRAZY.
SHE'S YOUR ENEMY, NOT ME. YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING FOR SPYRAL--
--YOU'RE BEING USED BY LEVIATHAN.
I DID LOVE YOU, YOU KNOW. JUST AS YOU LOVED ME.
BUT WE BOTH HAD ALLEGIANCES HIGHER THAN LOVE.
UNFORTUNATELY, WHERE YOU BOWED BEFORE AN ORDERED GRID OF CHILDISH PEACE...
...I SERVED THE SPIRAL OF WAR.

YOU'RE A LIAR!
I'M THE ONLY PERSON YOU KNOW WHO'S NOT, PARIS!
MATRON BERTINELLI ISN'T DEAD, SAINT HADRIAN'S IS UNDER SIEGE BY ACTUAL ENEMIES, AND WE'RE HERE TRYING TO KILL EACH OTHER.
THAT'S THE TRUTH. NO SPY CRAP. NO HYPNOS. NO LIES.
SO TELL ME, DO YOU REALLY WANT TO KEEP FIGHTING?
ARE YOU PAWNS OF A WOMAN YOU BARELY KNOW?
OR ARE YOU HADRIAN'S WOMEN?
Heh.
YOU'RE RIGHT, ALIA.
I DID LOVE YOU.
CRACK!
BEFORE I KNEW WHAT YOU WERE.
LIAR.
YOU ALWAYS KNEW WHAT I WAS.
KA-CLICK!

JUST AS I KNOW WHO *YOU* ARE.
THE TIGER KING OF KANDAHAR, STRIPPED OF HIS FIGHT BY *PITY* AND *KINDNESS*. TOO *NOBLE* TO BE THE MONSTER YOU CLAIM TO BE. TOO *WEAK* TO PULL THAT TRIGGER.
TELL ME I'M WRONG. SHOW ME WHAT YOU *ARE*.
SHOW ME WITH A *BULLET*.
TIGER! WE'VE GOT *LUKA NETZ* IN THE BUILDING, BUT THE SKULL GIRLS ARE SAFE IN LOCKDOWN WITH THE OTHER, *uh*, *NOT* SKULL GIRLS.
SCORE ONE FOR THE GOOD GUYS.
...
YES...
...*THE GOOD GUYS*.
"AT LAST, THE CIRCLE IS COMPLETE..."


...MY BEAUTIFUL SISTER.
THE UNCONSCIOUS. AN ELDRITCH BEAST. EVER SLUMBERING. EVER DREAMING.
THE CONSCIOUS. A DARK TOWER. EVER WATCHING. EVER SHAPING.
CAN YOU HEAR HIM? IN YOUR MIND?
SO CLEARLY. IT'S LIKE WE NEVER LEFT THAT CAVE.
WE NEVER DID, DEAR ELIZABETH. NOT TRULY. ALL THE WORLD IS FATHER'S CAVE AND WE ITS ONLY CARETAKERS.
HOW INSIGHTFUL YOU ARE, MY SHADOW SELF...
...I WILL MISS YOU SO WHEN I AM GONE.


WHEN YOU ARE GONE?!
I AM FATHER'S CHOSEN! THE GUARDIAN OF HIS NAME!
I AM AGENT ZERO!
YOU ARE NOTH--
AH!
YOU ARE A DILETTANTE, SISTER. A SUPER-VILLAIN PRETENDING TO BE A SPY.
I HAVE THE MIND. THE PATIENCE. THE WILL.
NO! YOU HAVE ONLY DELUSIONS!
JUST LIKE WHEN WE WERE GIRLS.
WE WOULD FIGHT. AND BLEED. AND SCREAM.
THIS SAME FAMILIAR SCENE. ALL THAT'S MISSING IS FATHER, TELLING US TO--
NO. DO NOT STOP ON MY ACCOUNT, MY DAUGHTERS.
PLEASE...

FIGHT HARDER

WRITERS JACKSON LANZING & COLLIN KELLY ARTISTS ROGE ANTONIO & GERALDO BORGES
COLORIST JEROMY COX LETTERER CARLOS M. MANGUAL COVER MIKEL JANÍN

"Turning and turning, the widening gyre. The falcon cannot hear the falconer..."
NO, MY DEAR. THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR YEATS.
I, DOCTOR DAEDALUS, AM THE UNSEEN STAR IN WHOSE GRAVITY YOU, MY CHILDREN, MUST ORBIT.
FATHER, I DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOU SAID ONE OF US WOULD BE THE VESSEL OF YOUR RETURN. NOT THIS PRETENDER.
DON'T YOU SEE, SISTER? OUR DESTINY, EVERYTHING WE'VE WORKED FOR...
...IT WAS ALL A TRICK. THE CROWN WAS NEVER TO BE OURS. ONLY HIS.
TO WEAR THIS CROWN IS TO FLY TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN. THE MIND INSIDE THIS VESSEL IS GONE.
BUT DO NOT WEEP, MY DAUGHTERS. YOU CAN STILL SERVE THE COMING CATACLYSM.
IF YOU ARE WILLING.

IF WE ARE *WILLING*?
WHEN HAS CHOICE *EVER* FACTORED INTO OUR LIVES?
Ah YES. YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO SING.
YES. HOW FOOLISH OF ME...
"...TO WANT SOMETHING FOR MYSELF."
GRAYSON, THE SYNDICATE'S NEUTRALIZED AND THE SCHOOL IS SAFE. IT'S TIME TO *GO*.
NO-CAN-DO, TIGER. I DIDN'T COME HERE TO TRADE PUNCHES WITH KING FARADAY. I CAME HERE FOR HELENA.
THE TRACKER I PLACED ON HER BODY JUST STARTED PINGING. SHE'S BEEN *TAKEN*, WHICH MEANS ONE OF THE ASSASSINS MUST'VE SLIPPED PAST--
NO ONE SLIPPED PAST.
MIDNIGHTER'S CORRECT. SHE HASN'T BEEN TAKEN. SHE'S *GONE*.
THE HELL IS *THAT* SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
THINK ABOUT IT, IDIOT. THE PLAN THAT'S BEEN IN MOTION SINCE THE DAY YOU *ARRIVED* HERE. THE TRUE INTENT BEHIND SPYRAL.
THE RETURN OF DOCTOR DAEDALUS IS AT HAND...

"...AND HELENA IS HIS CHOSEN VESSEL."
MY DAUGHTERS.
I GAVE YOU THE ONLY CHOICE YOU EVER NEEDED: KILL OR DIE.
NOW, IF ONE OF YOU WOULD JOIN ME, I HAVE NEEDS BEYOND THIS TAWDRY CELLAR.
CLIK
ONE OF US.
NO, LUKA. I...I REFUSE HIM.
WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE TWO ARMS OF THE SAME ENDLESS SPIRAL. NOT EACH OTHER'S EXECUTIONERS.
PLEASE.
LUKA.
YOU CAN MAKE THE SAME CHOICE.
I'M SORRY, GRAYSON.
WHAT IS HAPPENING RIGHT NOW, TIGER? HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT DAEDALUS HAS PLANNED?
BECAUSE THE SPYDER HAS BEEN PLAYING US ALL, BUT IT COULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO WIN.
I HAVE HIGHER ALLEGIANCES THAN YOU.
DICK, I HATE TO BE THE ONE TO TELL YOU THIS...

...BUT I THINK YOUR PARTNER WORKS FOR *CHECKMATE.*

The SECOND COMING

WRITERS / JACKSON LANZING & COLLIN KELLY ARTIST / ROGE ANTONIO
LETTERER / CARLOS M. MANGUAL COVER / MIKEL JANÍN COLORIST / JEROMY COX

SORRY, DICK. THIS ISN'T MY SCENE.

DOOR.

STAND DOWN, GRAYSON. THIS IS OUR OPERATION NOW.

OUR OPERATION?

LIKE THE MAN IN BLACK SAID.

I'M WITH *CHECKMATE.* AND I ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.

YOU WERE BLINDED BY EMPATHY.

BISHOP FIVE, DAEDALUS IS MAKING HIS GAMBIT.

OR IS IT *HER* GAMBIT?

SHE IS YOUR ALPHA TARGET. KILL THE ENEMY *ROOK* AND USE THE TRACKER TO GIVE CHASE.

CONFIRMED, BLACK KING. I KNOW HIM LIKE A BROTHER. HE WON'T STAND IN MY WAY.

TIGER, IF YOU OR MAXWELL LORD TOUCH HELENA, I'M GOING TO RIP THOSE STRIPES OFF YOUR FACE!

PSHOWWWW

I'VE NEVER SEEN A MORE PERFECT BOARD.

DAEDALUS GONE. SPYRAL IN SHAMBLES. GRAYSON SOON DEAD.

AND THE TRUE PRIZE, UNDEFENDED...

...WAITING FOR ITS *LORD.*

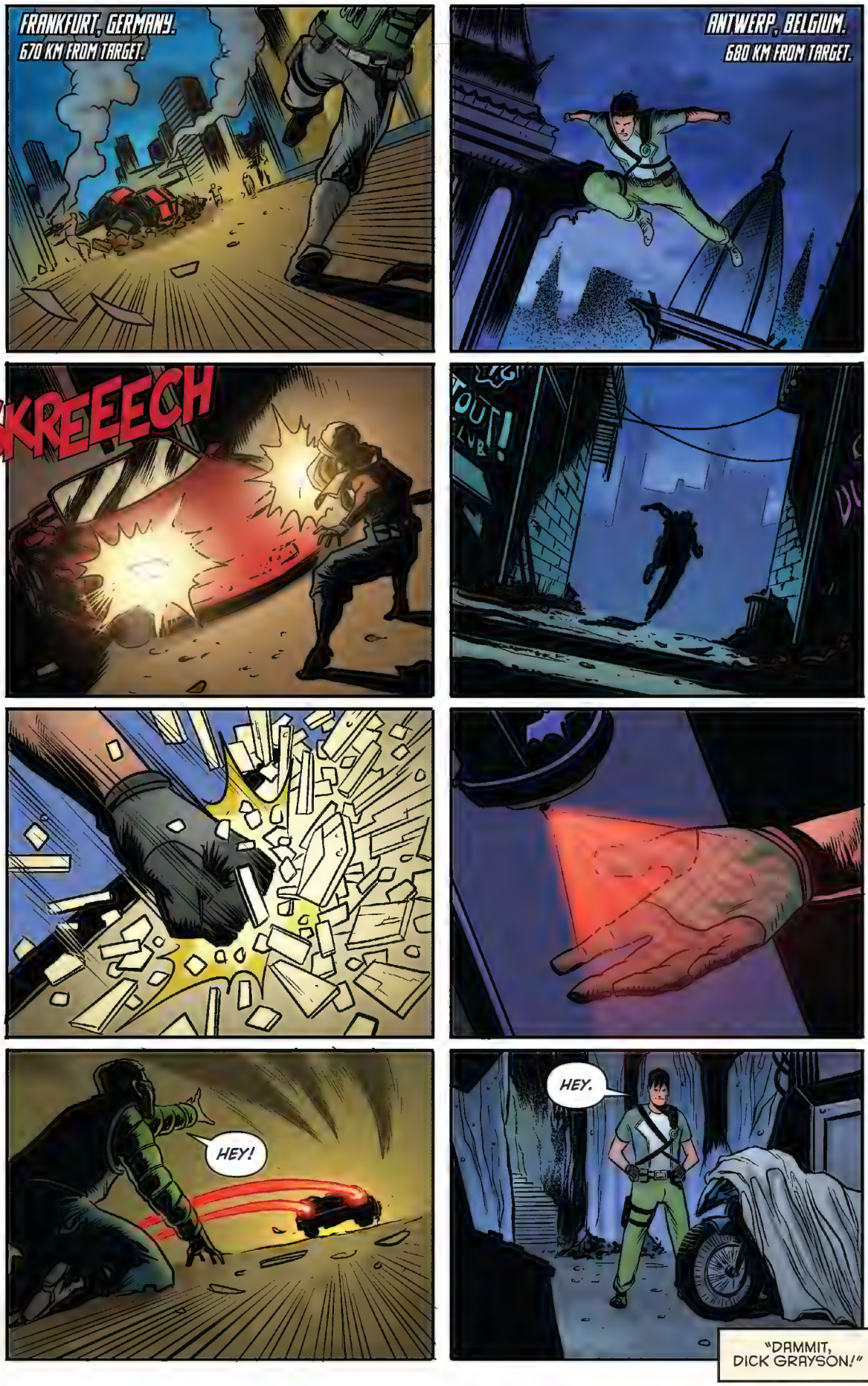
HOW LONG, TIGER! HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN LYING TO ME, TO US?!
YOU THINK I WAS *TURNED*, IDIOT? THIS IS WHO I'VE BEEN FROM THE START!
KEEPING SECRETS IS *WHAT I DO.*
THE GAME HAS ALWAYS BEEN BIGGER THAN YOU KNEW. BIGGER THAN EVEN YOUR *MISTER MALONE* SUSPECTED.
AND THE GOAL AT THE END WAS, WHAT? KILL *HELENA*? PUT A BULLET IN THE HEAD OF YOUR *FRIEND*?
HELENA'S NOT MY FRIEND. SHE IS THE VESSEL FOR A MADMAN, WHO EVEN NOW RACES TO BEGIN AN ENDGAME THAT'S BEEN FESTERING FOR HALF A CENTURY!
CLICK
AND WHEN I GET THERE, I'LL *STOP HIM.*
BUT I'M SAVING HELENA. FULL STOP.
SO I SUGGEST YOU *EJECT.*
BOOM

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, DICK. YOU'RE A GOOD MAN. TRUSTING.
BUT SPYRAL HAS BEEN PLAYING ON CHECKMATE'S BOARD SINCE THE START. YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW DEEP THIS GOES.
BRAK BRAK BRAK
HOW LONG WE'VE WAITED FOR THE END GAME. HOW LONG I'VE WAITED.
TRYING TO KEEP MATRON, ALIA, ZERO AND ELISABETH NETZ FROM FULFILLING DAEDALUS' PLAN. KEEPING WATCH FOR THE END OF THE WORLD. ALL WHILE KEEPING THE GREAT DICK GRAYSON TIED UP IN KNOTS.
PRAKOW
WHUMP
THAT'S WHERE YOU MESSED UP. ALL THAT SPYCRAFT AND YOU MISSED THE OBVIOUS, TIGER.
I LIKE BEING TIED UP!
KRAK
OOM
R.J. Ramos
AFTER
F.M.

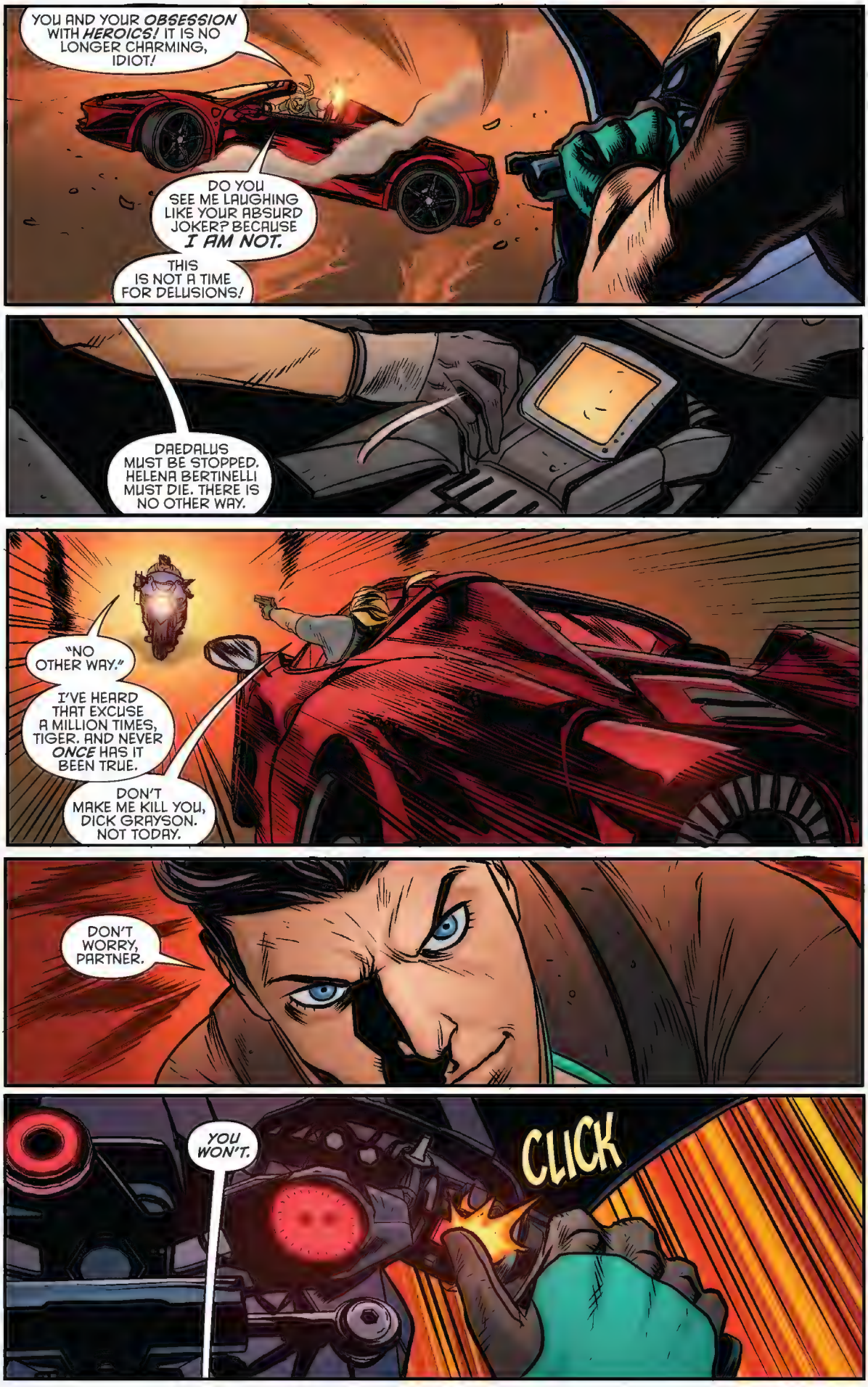
SO WHERE'S YOUR BLACK KING NOW? SEEMS LIKE HE'S SACRIFICING HIS STAR PAWN.
POW
=hurk=
CRUNCH
MAX LORD IS ENDING WHAT MINOS BEGAN.
AND I--
--AM NO ONE'S--
--SACRIFICE.
THUMPHUUUMP
"'The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned...'"

GERMANY. THE RHINELAND.
THE SECRET NAZI RAILWAY OF DOCTOR DAEDALUS.
"The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity."
WHICH ARE YOU, DAUGHTER? THE BEST OR WORST?
ONLY MYSELF. ONLY WHO YOU MADE ME TO BE.
MY SECRET SHADOW. MY CREATURE IN THE DEEP. MY LEVIATHAN.
DID YOUR SISTER DIE WELL?
OF COURSE. SHE IS A NETZ. EVERYTHING WE DO, WE DO PERFECTLY.
I THOUGHT SHE MIGHT SURPRISE US. SHE WAS ALWAYS THE SMARTER OF MY DAUGHTERS. I ENGINEERED HER THAT WAY.
YOU...MADE HER SMARTER. OF COURSE YOU DID.
WHY HER? WHY NOT BOTH OF US?
I DID NOT NEED TWO SMART CHILDREN. I NEEDED ONE OF YOU TO BE CRUEL. SO I BENT THE WORLD INTO MY DESIRED SHAPE.
IT'S WHAT I DO.
YES. JUST AS BETRAYAL IS WHAT I DO.
CRUEL LUKA, DEALER IN HOMOCIDE. SORORICIDE.

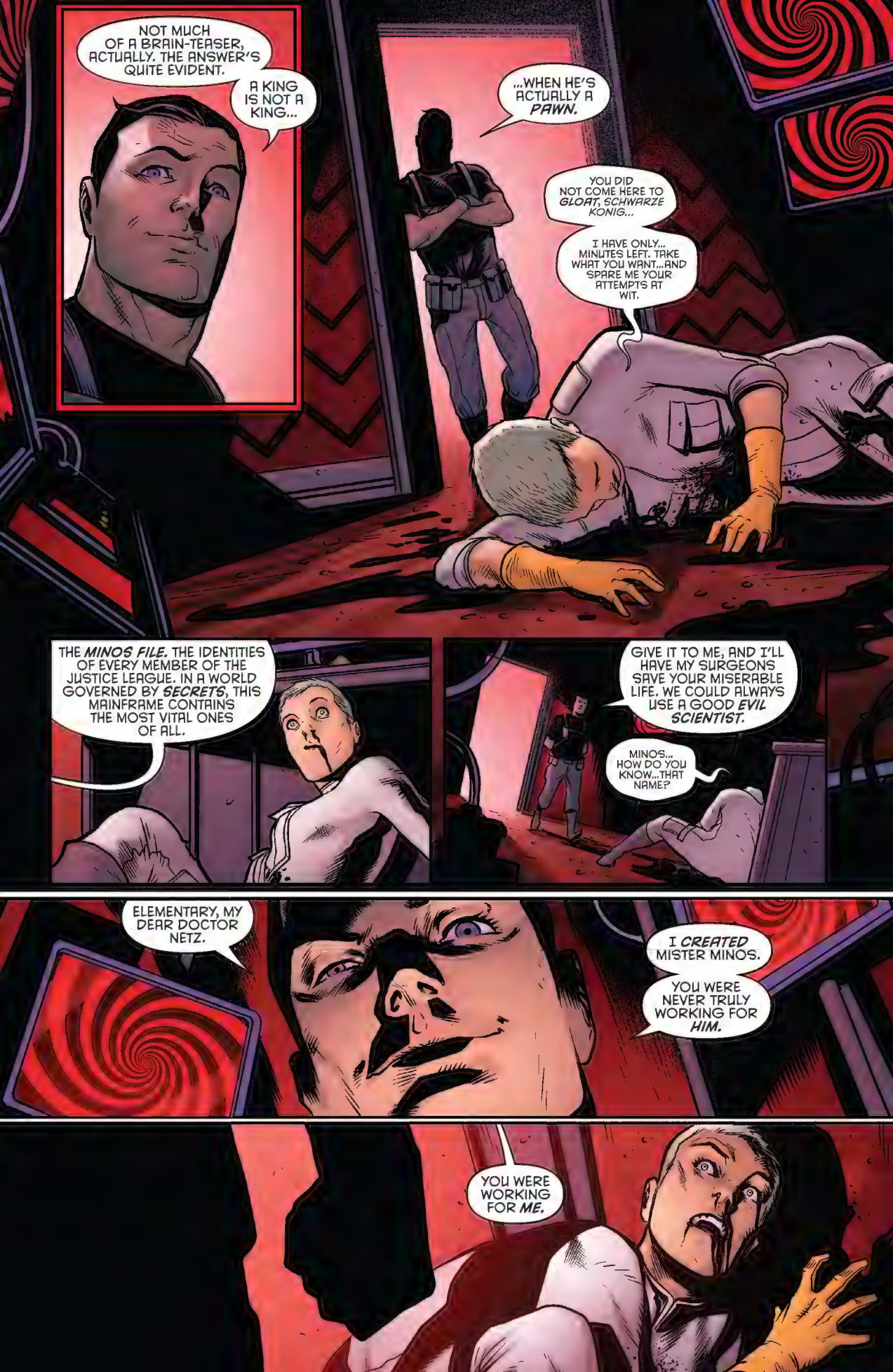
YOU WERE NO FATHER TO ME. YOU WERE A SCIENTIST, BLIND TO THE DAMAGE YOU INFLICTED ON YOUR EXPERIMENTS.
BUT NOW I WILL STEP OVER YOUR STOLEN BODY AND TAKE MY RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE CENTER OF THE WEB. TELL ME "FATHER," HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE THE HELPLESS ONE FOR ONCE?
"...The darkness drops again but now I know that twenty centuries of stony sleep were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle--"
STOP! THIS IS THE TIME FOR HONESTY, NOT POETRY! JUST ONE HONEST MOMENT IN YOUR WHOLE WRETCHED LIFE!
I'M AFRAID I MUST DECLINE.
CHK
AAAAAAGGH!
"...And what rough beast, its hour come round at last...
"...slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?"


FRANKFURT, GERMANY.
670 KM FROM TARGET.
ANTWERP, BELGIUM.
680 KM FROM TARGET.
SKREEECH
HEY!
HEY.
"DAMMIT, DICK GRAYSON!"

WHERE DO YOU GET THOSE *RIDICULOUS TOYS?!*
AW, DON'T BE JEALOUS. WE CAN'T *ALL* BE BEST FRIENDS WITH BATMAN.
THAT'S *ENOUGH.*


YOU AND YOUR OBSESSION WITH HEROICS! IT IS NO LONGER CHARMING, IDIOT!
DO YOU SEE ME LAUGHING LIKE YOUR ABSURD JOKER? BECAUSE I AM NOT.
THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR DELUSIONS!
DAEDALUS MUST BE STOPPED. HELENA BERTINELLI MUST DIE. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY.
"NO OTHER WAY."
I'VE HEARD THAT EXCUSE A MILLION TIMES, TIGER. AND NEVER ONCE HAS IT BEEN TRUE.
DON'T MAKE ME KILL YOU, DICK GRAYSON. NOT TODAY.
DON'T WORRY, PARTNER.
YOU WON'T.
CLICK

OH, AND TIGER?
THOOOOM
THANKS FOR THE RAMP.
VMMMM
"HERE'S A RIDDLE FOR YOU.
"WHEN IS A KING NOT A KING?"


NOT MUCH OF A BRAIN-TEASER, ACTUALLY. THE ANSWER'S QUITE EVIDENT.
A KING IS NOT A KING...
...WHEN HE'S ACTUALLY A *PAWN.*
YOU DID NOT COME HERE TO *GLOAT, SCHWARZE KONIG...*
I HAVE ONLY... MINUTES LEFT. TAKE WHAT YOU WANT...AND SPARE ME YOUR ATTEMPTS AT WIT.
THE *MINOS FILE.* THE IDENTITIES OF EVERY MEMBER OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE. IN A WORLD GOVERNED BY *SECRETS*, THIS MAINFRAME CONTAINS THE MOST VITAL ONES OF ALL.
GIVE IT TO ME, AND I'LL HAVE MY SURGEONS SAVE YOUR MISERABLE LIFE. WE COULD ALWAYS USE A GOOD *EVIL SCIENTIST.*
MINOS... HOW DO YOU KNOW...THAT NAME?
ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR DOCTOR NETZ.
I *CREATED* MISTER MINOS.
YOU WERE NEVER TRULY WORKING FOR *HIM.*
YOU WERE WORKING FOR *ME.*

DON'T BEAT YOURSELF UP ABOUT IT. EVEN *HE* DIDN'T KNOW.
IT'S AMAZING WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE WHEN YOU ANONYMOUSLY GIFT A RADICAL WIKILEAKS WANNABE UNLIMITED MEANS TO ACHIEVE HIS ENDS. THE *FEROCITY* OF PURPOSE YOU CAN INSPIRE IN YOUR PUPPETS.
OF COURSE, SOMETIMES THE PUPPET GOES *MAD* WITH POWER AND TRIES TO CONQUER THE WORLD WITH GOD GARDEN SUPER-ROBOTS, BUT THAT'S JUST THE RISK YOU RUN.
CLEVER AND CAREFUL PLAY STILL WINS OUT IN THE END.
YOU THINK YOU'VE *WON*? THEN I HAVE A RIDDLE FOR *YOU*, CLEVER BOY.
TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK
MINDS FILE ARCHIVE
WHEN IS A PAWN...NOT A PAWN?
TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK
WHEN SHE REACHES THE END OF HER JOURNEY. THE LAST SQUARE ON THE BOARD...
NO!
DELETE ARCHIVE
...AND BECOMES A *QUEEN*.
ARCHIVE DELETED
ARCHIVE DELETED
...
LORD TO KNIGHT. PREPARE FOR EXTRACTION.

"THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR US HERE."
COME ON, HELENA...
IT'S JUST A SECRET NAZI SUPER-CASTLE AND A *DOOMSDAY WORLDWIDE BRAINWASHING WEAPON.*
YOU FACED AN ENTIRE BOARDING SCHOOL OF MERCILESS ENTITLED *TEENAGERS*, YOU'VE CAN FACE THIS.
KEEP FIGHTING. I'M COMING FOR YOU. I'M ALMOST--
WHAT'S THE MATTER, GRAYSON?!

YOU THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN JUMP WITHOUT A NET?!
I THOUGHT I WOULD *ENJOY* THIS MOMENT MORE.
DAMN YOU FOR MAKING ME *LIKE* YOU.
AW.
YOU *LIKE* ME?
I LIKE YOU TOO, BUDDY.
WHICH IS WHAT MAKES THIS NEXT PART SO HARD.

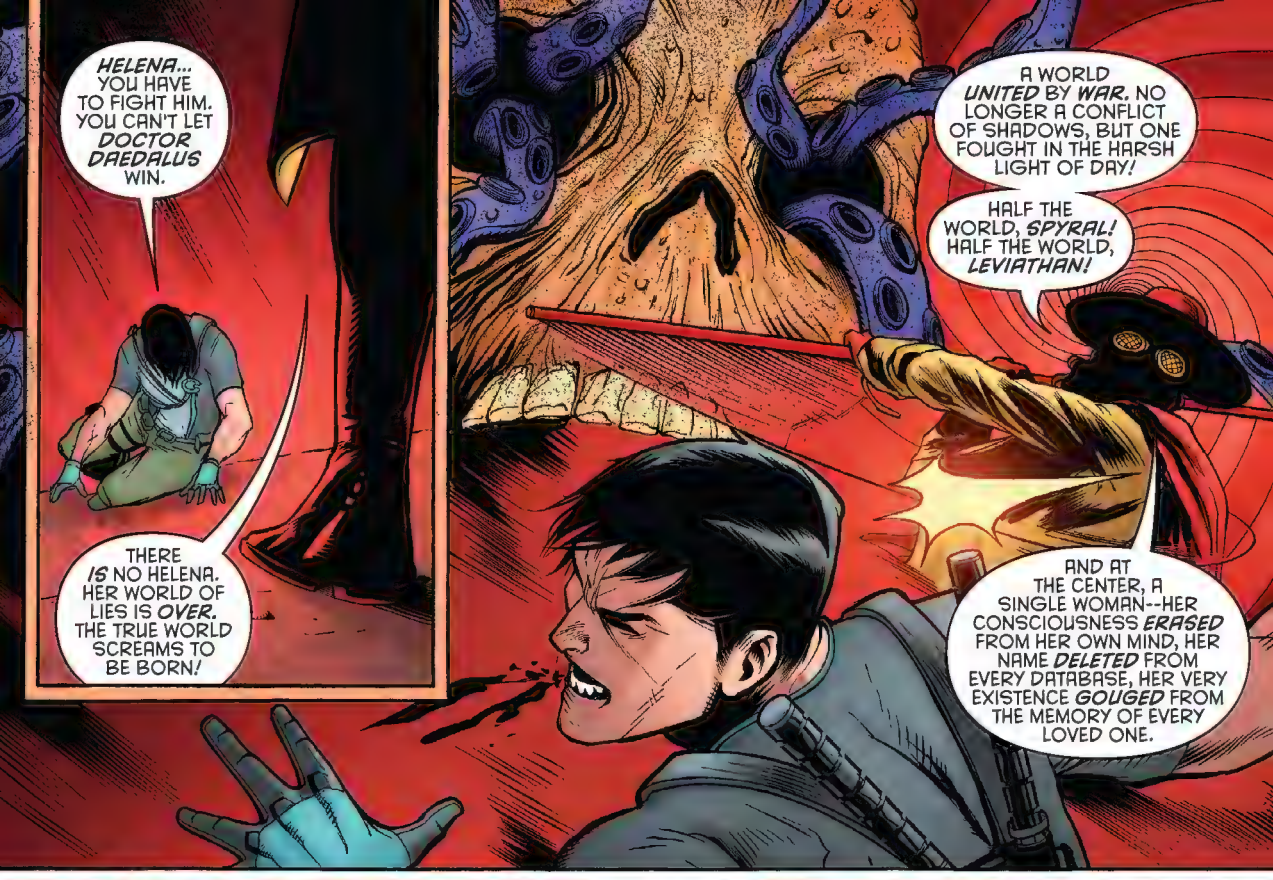
ON OUR VERY FIRST MISSION TOGETHER.
GOING UP AGAINST THE OLD GUN.
UP ON THAT ROOFTOP.
I LEARNED A LESSON I'LL NEVER FORGET.
UNH!
I'M PROUD OF YOU, DICK. YOU...YOU'RE FINALLY GOING TO PULL THAT TRIGGER.
YES. I AM. BUT REMEMBER, TIGER. DON'T ANTICIPATE THE EXPLOSION.
CAUSE THE EXPLOSION.
YOU THINK AN AVALANCHE WILL KILL ME, GRAYSON?!
I'M NOT TRYING TO KILL YOU. I'M TRYING TO SAVE YOUR LIFE.
BANG
WHY? I'LL HUNT YOU TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH!
BECAUSE, TIGER...

"...IT'S WHAT I DO."

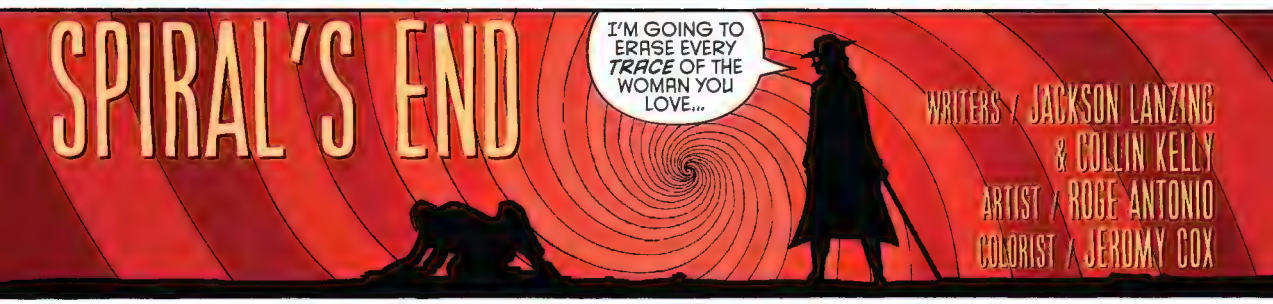
AH.
A FLY ENTERS THE WEB, THINKING ITSELF A SPIDER.
HOW DELIGHTFULLY NAIVE.
"NAIVE." ONE OF THESE DAYS, YOU CREEPS ARE GONNA HAVE TO COME UP WITH A BETTER NAME TO CALL ME.
NEW NAMES. YOUR SPECIALTY, YES?
WOULD YOU PREFER ROBIN? NIGHTWING? AGENT 37?
MY NAME'S DICK.
RICHARD. A STRONG GERMANIC NAME. DERIVED EQUALLY FROM THE WORDS "RIC" AND "HARD."
STEP INTO MY PRESENCE AND SEE THE TRUTH...
I AM THE CENTER OF THE ENDLESS SPIRAL. THE MIND OF THE CRUELEST LEVIATHAN.
BRAVE. AND POWER.
YOU HAVE HELENA BERTINELLI.
I AM NOT A VILLAIN. I AM NOT A MAN.
NO. I AM HELENA BERTINELLI.
OH, RICHARD. YOU ONCE AGAIN EARN YOUR REPUTATION AS A CHILD.
THIS IS YOUR ONE CHANCE. LET HER GO.
NO. YOU'RE A SUPER-VILLAIN. I'VE BEEN TAKING DOWN DELUDED MONSTERS LIKE YOU SINCE I WAS FIFTEEN.
I CANNOT. SHE IS MY VESSEL. I AM HER GOD.

...I AM
YOUR END.

"YOU'VE KNOWN IT SINCE THAT NIGHT THE WORLD BROKE APART IN YOUR TINY HANDS.
"THERE IS NO *WINNING* THE FIGHT YOU CHOSE.
"THERE IS NO *LAST* CRUSADE.
"THERE IS ONLY A DARK PLACE, DEEP IN THE EARTH FOR YOU TO REST, WHEN YOU'VE FINALLY GIVEN UP FIGHTING.
"THIS IS THE SECRET *TRUTH* OF THE WORLD.
"THE *SPIRAL* HAS NO END, *DICK GRAYSON.*
BUT *YOU* DO.


HELENA... YOU HAVE TO FIGHT HIM. YOU CAN'T LET DOCTOR DAEDALUS WIN.
THERE IS NO HELENA. HER WORLD OF LIES IS OVER. THE TRUE WORLD SCREAMS TO BE BORN!
A WORLD UNITED BY WAR. NO LONGER A CONFLICT OF SHADOWS, BUT ONE FOUGHT IN THE HARSH LIGHT OF DAY!
HALF THE WORLD, SPYRAL! HALF THE WORLD, LEVIATHAN!
AND AT THE CENTER, A SINGLE WOMAN--HER CONSCIOUSNESS ERASED FROM HER OWN MIND, HER NAME DELETED FROM EVERY DATABASE, HER VERY EXISTENCE GOUGED FROM THE MEMORY OF EVERY LOVED ONE.

SPIRAL'S END



WRITERS / JACKSON LANZING & COLLIN KELLY
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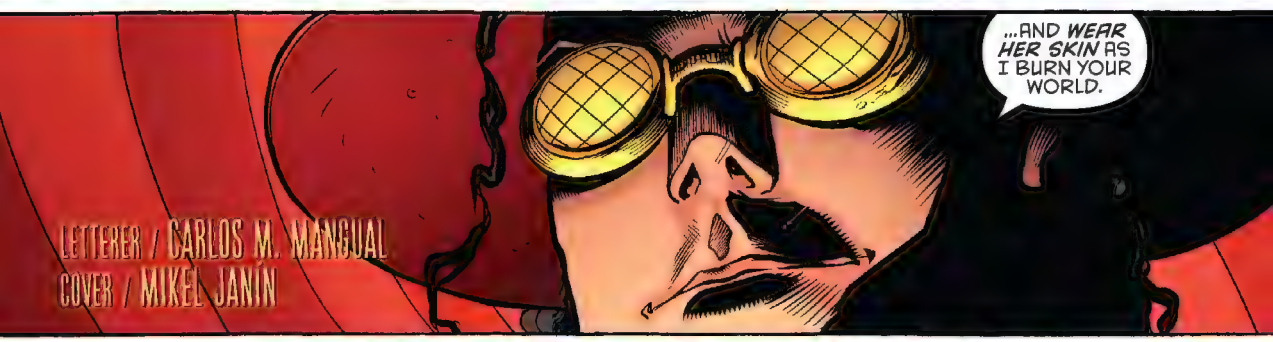


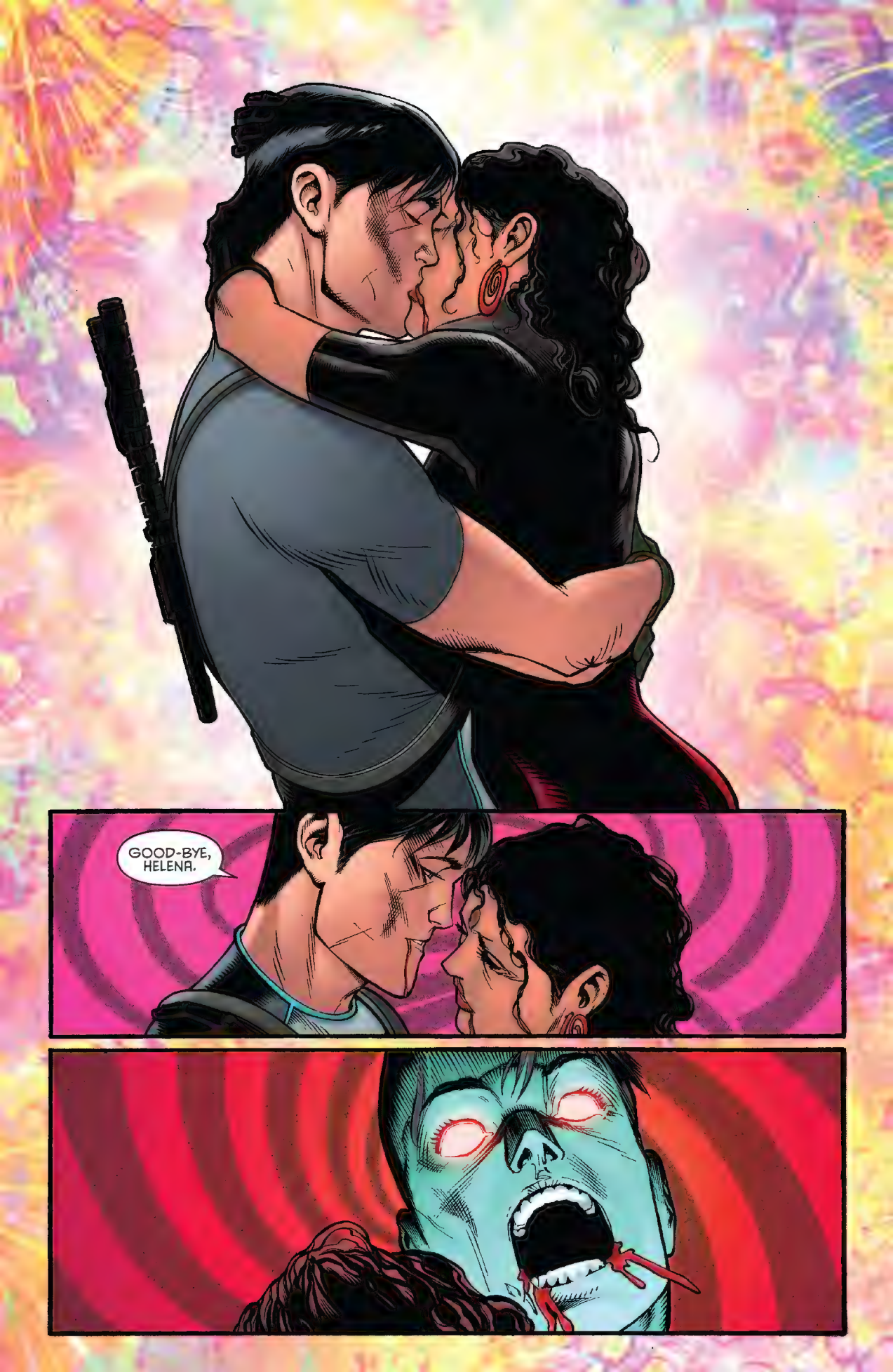
LETTERER / CARLOS M. MANGUAL
COVER / MIKEL JANÍN

TAKE ME.
HAH! SUCH FIGHT, RICHARD!
YOU HAVE NO IDEA.
I WAS BORN TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE.
I WAS TRAINED BY THE BATMAN.
THE COURT OF OWLS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO CONTROL MY SKILLS FOR YEARS.
YOUR PLOT MAY HAVE FOOLED ALL THE SPIES, BUT TO ME, YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER SUPER-VILLAIN.
YOU CAN PLAY MIND GAMES, BUT I WILL NEVER GIVE UP.
YOU FEEL THAT PAIN? 'CAUSE I WILL DEAL IT TO YOU FROM THE GRAVE.
BUT I'M OFFERING YOU ANOTHER PATH.
ERASE ME. EVERY PART OF ME. WEAR MY FACE. FIGHT WITH MY FISTS.
JUST LET HELENA GO.

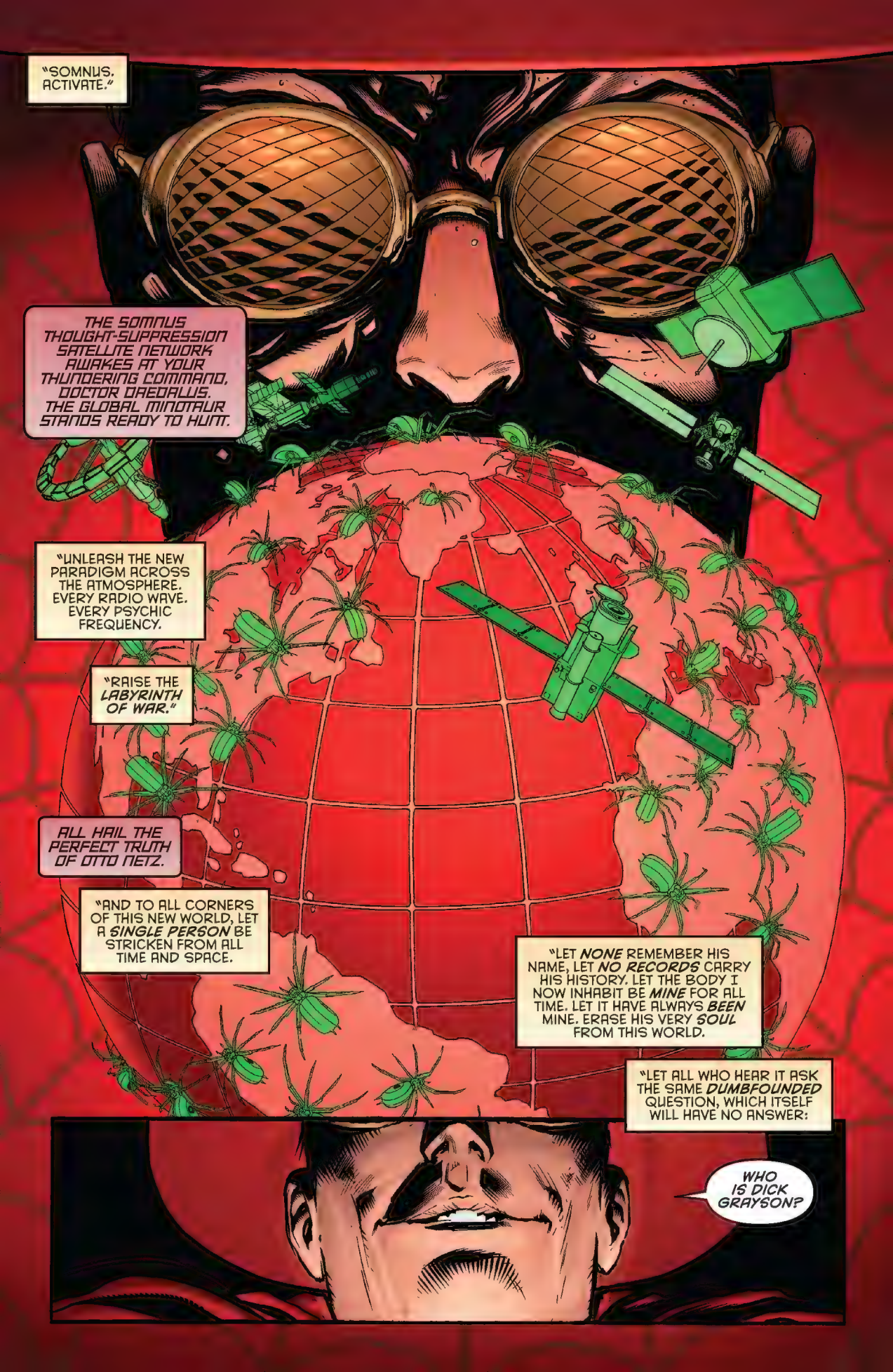
LOVE.
IT MAKES FOOLS OF US ALL.
IS THAT A YES?
OH, RICHARD. YOU FOOLISH, HANDSOME BOY. ALWAYS LEAPING INTO THE UNKNOWN WITH NO CARE FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY.
ALWAYS FALLING INTO TRAPS.
IT WAS ALWAYS A YES.

...
...Dick?
HELENA!
I...I SAW EVERYTHING. I WAS TRAPPED IN THE DARK, IN THE HYPNOS. I...I COULDN'T FIGHT.
HE'S GONE. IT'S OKAY. YOU'RE OKAY.
HE'S NOT GONE. HE'S JUST... PREPARING.
DICK, WHAT DID YOU DO?
ONLY WHAT I HAD TO, HELENA.
YOU HAD NO RIGHT.
TAKE IT EASY. YOU'RE WEAK.
I AM NOT. AND IF YOU EVER CALL ME THAT AGAIN, I'LL DROP YOU TO THE FLOOR.
NOW TELL ME YOUR BRILLIANT PLAN FOR TAKING THIS CREEP DOWN SO I CAN MAKE SURE YOU DON'T SCREW IT UP.
HELENA...
...THERE IS NO PLAN.

THE HELL DOES *THAT* MEAN?
IT MEANS IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO *RUN.* I'VE SPENT *YEARS* TRAINING MY MIND.
LEARNING HOW TO FIGHT BACK AGAINST MONSTERS THAT WOULD USE ME AGAINST MY FRIENDS. THIS IS THE ONLY WAY.
DICK, THIS ISN'T DEATH. THIS IS SO MUCH *WORSE.* YOU CAN'T FIGHT THIS.
I HAVE TO *TRY.*
RIGHT.
YOU'RE A *SUPERHERO.*
I FORGOT.
HONESTLY? SO DID I.
UNTIL *YOU.*
I THINK ABOUT THAT NIGHT AT SAINT HADRIAN'S EVERY DAY. IT'S LIKE A MANTRA.
IT'S HOW I SURVIVED THE LAST FEW MONTHS, EVEN WHEN I WAS FIGHTING *AGAINST* YOU.
YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU TOLD ME?
"I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER *NIGHTWING.*"
SO I DID.


GOOD-BYE, HELENA.

WHAT A SHAME, MISS BERTINELLI. YOU DIDN'T RUN AWAY FAST ENOUGH.
YOU MAKE A TERRIBLE DAMSEL IN DISTRESS. OR PERHAPS AN EXCELLENT ONE.
BY THE WAY, NOW THAT I AM IN THIS GORGEOUS BODY, I CAN TELL YOU WITH SOME CERTAINTY THAT THE ONLY WOMAN DICK GRAYSON EVER TRULY LOVED WAS NAMED BARBARA--
SHE WAS MUCH PRETTIER THAN YOU.
YOU THINK I CARE?
NO.
I THINK YOU NO LONGER EXIST.

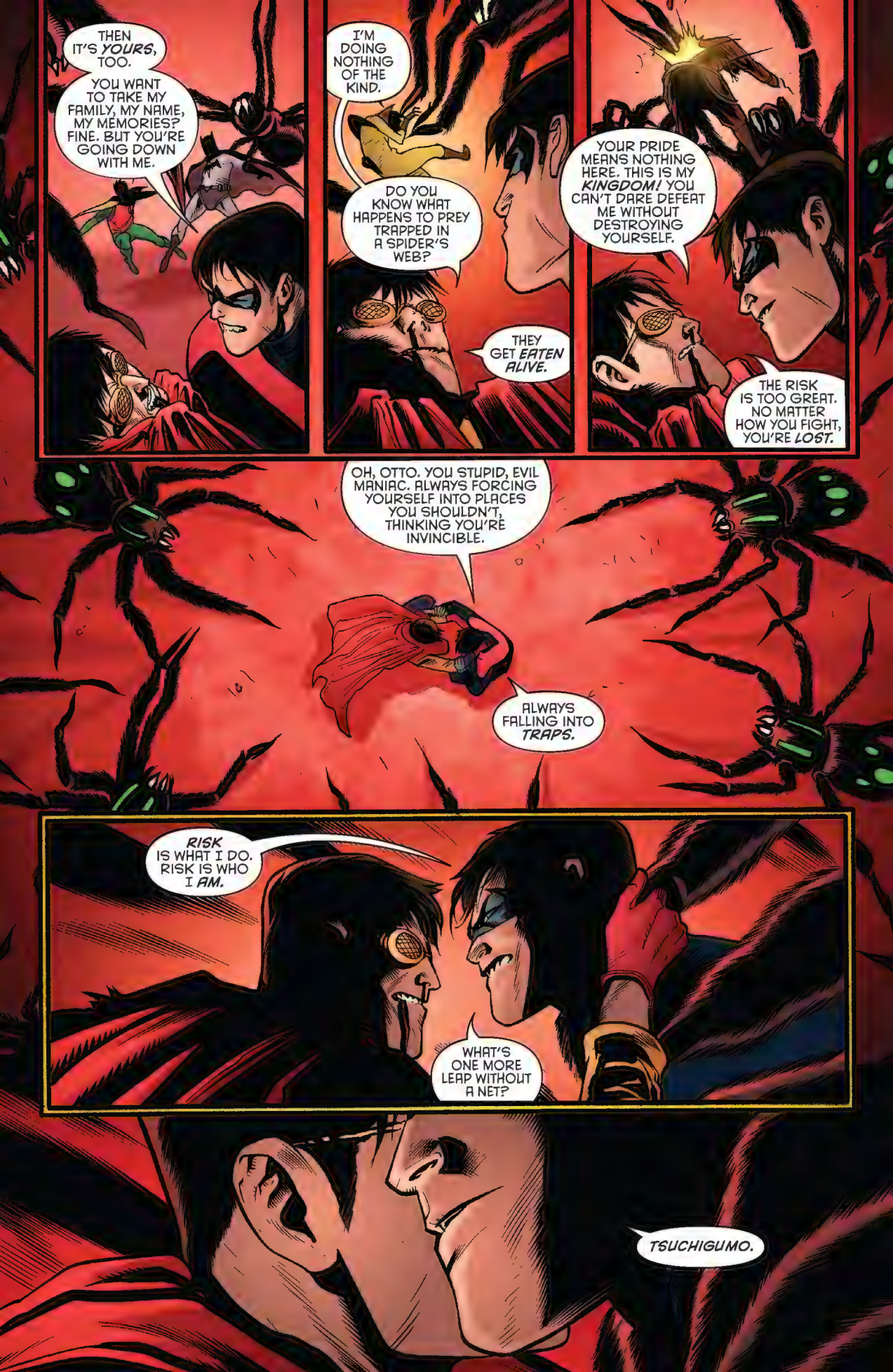

"SOMNUS. ACTIVATE."
THE SOMNUS THOUGHT-SUPPRESSION SATELLITE NETWORK AWAKES AT YOUR THUNDERING COMMAND, DOCTOR DAEDALUS. THE GLOBAL MINOTAUR STANDS READY TO HUNT.
"UNLEASH THE NEW PARADIGM ACROSS THE ATMOSPHERE. EVERY RADIO WAVE. EVERY PSYCHIC FREQUENCY.
"RAISE THE *LABYRINTH OF WAR.*"
ALL HAIL THE PERFECT TRUTH OF OTTO NETZ.
"AND TO ALL CORNERS OF THIS NEW WORLD, LET A *SINGLE PERSON* BE STRICKEN FROM ALL TIME AND SPACE.
"LET *NONE* REMEMBER HIS NAME, LET *NO RECORDS* CARRY HIS HISTORY. LET THE BODY I NOW INHABIT BE *MINE* FOR ALL TIME. LET IT HAVE ALWAYS *BEEN* MINE. ERASE HIS VERY *SOUL* FROM THIS WORLD.
"LET ALL WHO HEAR IT ASK THE SAME *DUMBFOUNDED* QUESTION, WHICH ITSELF WILL HAVE NO ANSWER:
WHO IS DICK GRAYSON?

GOOD QUESTION, OTTO.
SOMNUS, WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
OH, GIVE IT UP. YOUR CRAZY SATELLITE CAN'T HEAR YOU IN HERE.
IN *HERE?*
IN YOUR MIND.
IN *OUR* MIND.
THE WORLD OUTSIDE MAY HAVE FORGOTTEN.
BUT IN HERE, YOUR QUESTION'S A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED.
YOU WANNA KNOW WHO *DICK GRAYSON* IS?

YOU'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT.

IF IT'S FEAR YOU EXPECT TO SEE, YOU'LL BE DISAPPOINTED.
THE *INFERNO* DOESN'T FEAR *KINDLING.*
BEHOLD! I AM THE *GREATEST VERSION* OF OUR *GREATEST SELF!*
YIKES, NO ONE SHOW HIM A *MIRROR.* I'D HATE TO SHATTER HIS HILARIOUS DELUSION!
YEAH, HORRIBLE BUG EYES ISN'T REALLY A GOOD LOOK ON US. I THINK I'LL KICK THOSE OFF.
YOU'D USE HYPNOS TO BATTLE AGAINST ITS MASTER? ALL YOU'VE DONE IS TRAP YOURSELF IN A ROOM WITH GOD!
Hrk
NO, WE HAVEN'T...
KURACK
...WE'VE TRAPPED YOU IN A ROOM WITH *HIM!*
KKCHK
YOU'RE *DONE HERE,* DAEDALUS.
THWACK
RIIIIIP

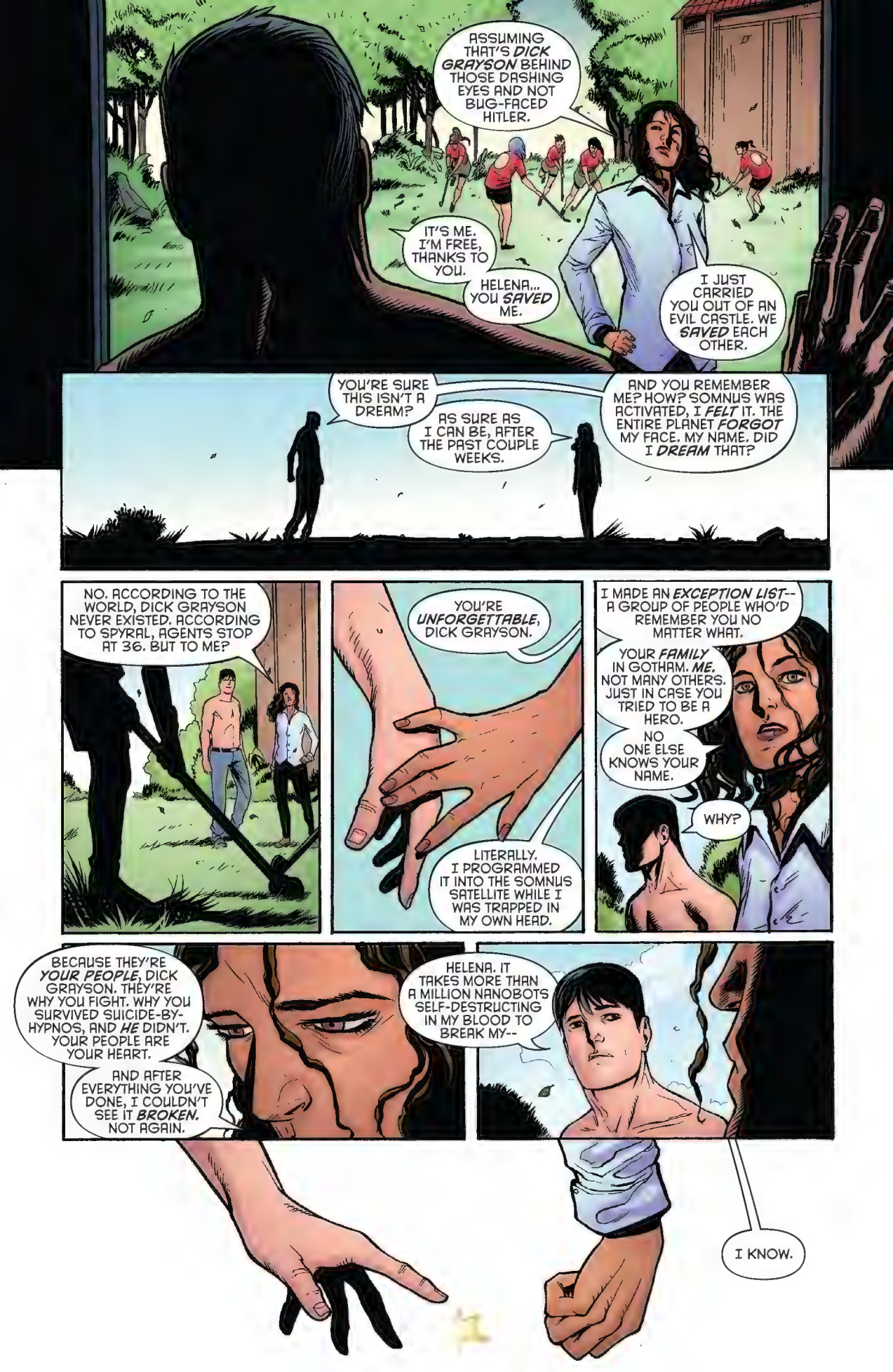
PFT
PFT
PFT
NOT IN THE LEAST! LOOK WHERE WE'RE STANDING. HOLDING THE CENTER.
THE WORLD IS TRAPPED IN OUR WEB. THE WORLD IS OURS TO SHAPE. JOIN ME.
NOT EVERY DAY YOU GET OFFERED THE CHANCE TO BECOME AN OMNISCIENT NAZI WARLORD...
SCHREEEE!
THRAK!
...BUT I'M AFRAID IT'S A PASS.
THEN IT IS THE LAST OFFER I WILL EVER MAKE. THIS PLACE IS NOT YOUR PLAYGROUND...
...IT IS YOUR END.

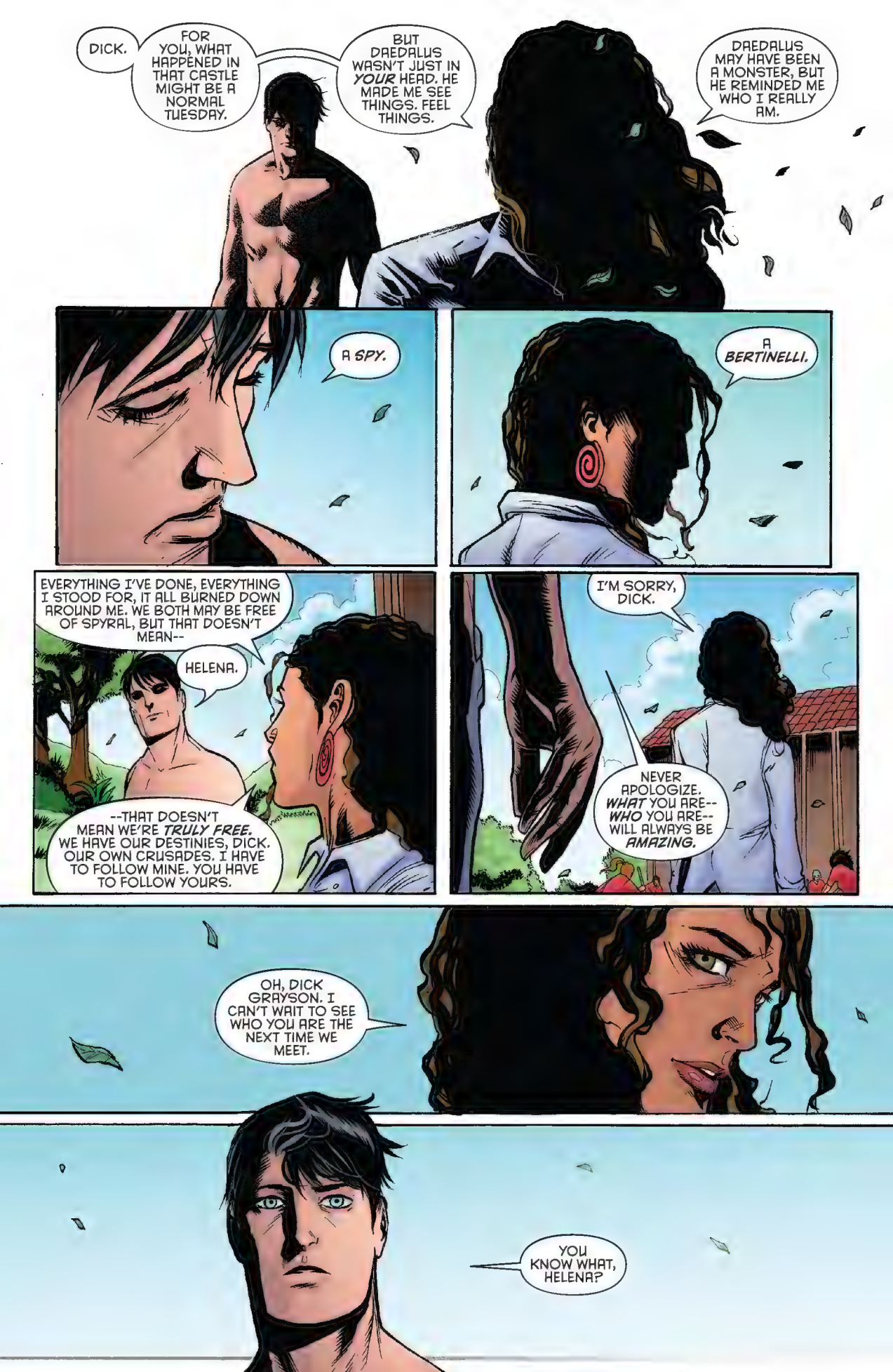

THEN IT'S YOURS, TOO.
YOU WANT TO TAKE MY FAMILY, MY NAME, MY MEMORIES? FINE. BUT YOU'RE GOING DOWN WITH ME.
I'M DOING NOTHING OF THE KIND.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS TO PREY TRAPPED IN A SPIDER'S WEB?
THEY GET EATEN ALIVE.
YOUR PRIDE MEANS NOTHING HERE. THIS IS MY KINGDOM! YOU CAN'T DARE DEFEAT ME WITHOUT DESTROYING YOURSELF.
THE RISK IS TOO GREAT. NO MATTER HOW YOU FIGHT, YOU'RE LOST.
OH, OTTO. YOU STUPID, EVIL MANIAC. ALWAYS FORCING YOURSELF INTO PLACES YOU SHOULDN'T, THINKING YOU'RE INVINCIBLE.
ALWAYS FALLING INTO TRAPS.
RISK IS WHAT I DO. RISK IS WHO I AM.
WHAT'S ONE MORE LEAP WITHOUT A NET?
TSUCHIGUMO.

NO!
MY WORLD IS AT HAND! I AM THE CENTER!
I AM...
NO... NOT YET.
...I WON'T...BE FORGOTTEN...
I CAN'T... BE...

ISTANBUL, ONE WEEK LATER.
"THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU, I KNEW I LOVED YOU.
"THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU, I KNEW I WOULD NEVER STOP.
"YOU SAID I WAS TOO KIND.
"THAT I HAD LOST MY NATURE. THAT I WAS NO LONGER A MONSTER.
"AND EVEN NOW, HAVING TURNED MY BACK ON CHECKMATE AND EMBRACED MY NEW ALLEGIANCE, I CANNOT DENY THE TRUTH.
"YOU WERE WRONG, ALIA.
BAM
I AM WHAT I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN.
GOOD-BYE, MY LOVE.
SPYRAL, THIS IS PATRON...

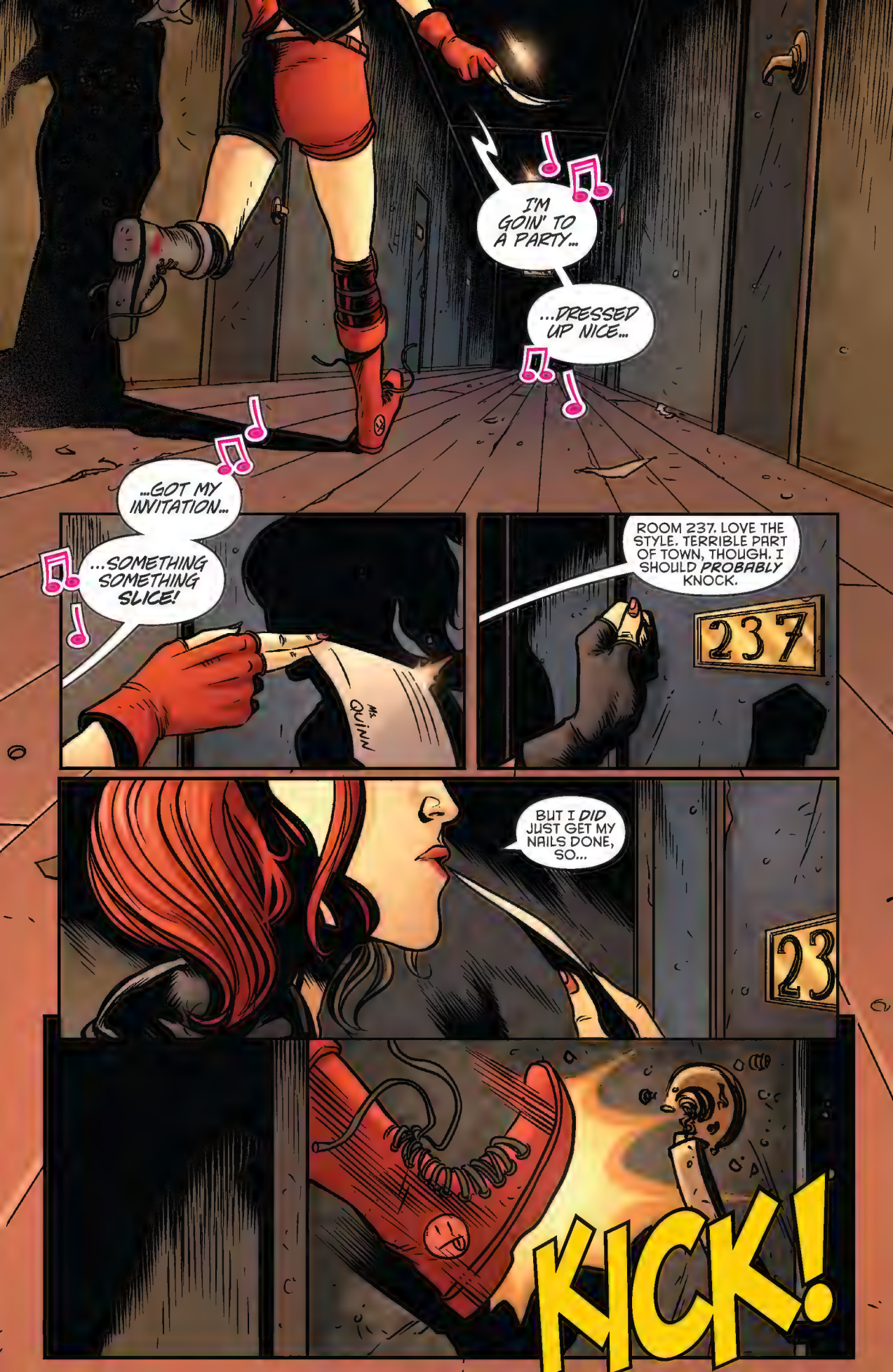
"...RETURNING TO THE FOLD."
WELCOME BACK.


ASSUMING THAT'S DICK GRAYSON BEHIND THOSE DASHING EYES AND NOT BUG-FACED HITLER.
IT'S ME. I'M FREE, THANKS TO YOU.
HELENA... YOU SAVED ME.
I JUST CARRIED YOU OUT OF AN EVIL CASTLE. WE SAVED EACH OTHER.
YOU'RE SURE THIS ISN'T A DREAM?
AS SURE AS I CAN BE, AFTER THE PAST COUPLE WEEKS.
AND YOU REMEMBER ME? HOW? SOMNUS WAS ACTIVATED, I FELT IT. THE ENTIRE PLANET FORGOT MY FACE. MY NAME. DID I DREAM THAT?
NO. ACCORDING TO THE WORLD, DICK GRAYSON NEVER EXISTED. ACCORDING TO SPYRAL, AGENTS STOP AT 36. BUT TO ME?
YOU'RE UNFORGETTABLE, DICK GRAYSON.
LITERALLY. I PROGRAMMED IT INTO THE SOMNUS SATELLITE WHILE I WAS TRAPPED IN MY OWN HEAD.
I MADE AN EXCEPTION LIST-- A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO'D REMEMBER YOU NO MATTER WHAT.
YOUR FAMILY IN GOTHAM. ME. NOT MANY OTHERS. JUST IN CASE YOU TRIED TO BE A HERO.
NO ONE ELSE KNOWS YOUR NAME.
WHY?
BECAUSE THEY'RE YOUR PEOPLE, DICK GRAYSON. THEY'RE WHY YOU FIGHT. WHY YOU SURVIVED SUICIDE-BY-HYPNOS, AND HE DIDN'T. YOUR PEOPLE ARE YOUR HEART.
AND AFTER EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE, I COULDN'T SEE IT BROKEN. NOT AGAIN.
HELENA. IT TAKES MORE THAN A MILLION NANOBOTS SELF-DESTRUCTING IN MY BLOOD TO BREAK MY--
I KNOW.


DICK.
FOR YOU, WHAT HAPPENED IN THAT CASTLE MIGHT BE A NORMAL TUESDAY.
BUT DAEDALUS WASN'T JUST IN *YOUR* HEAD. HE MADE ME SEE THINGS. FEEL THINGS.
DAEDALUS MAY HAVE BEEN A MONSTER, BUT HE REMINDED ME WHO I REALLY AM.
A *SPY.*
A *BERTINELLI.*
EVERYTHING I'VE DONE, EVERYTHING I STOOD FOR, IT ALL BURNED DOWN AROUND ME. WE BOTH MAY BE FREE OF SPYRAL, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN--
HELENA.
--THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE *TRULY FREE.* WE HAVE OUR DESTINIES, DICK. OUR OWN CRUSADES. I HAVE TO FOLLOW MINE. YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW YOURS.
I'M SORRY, DICK.
NEVER APOLOGIZE. *WHAT* YOU ARE-- *WHO* YOU ARE-- WILL ALWAYS BE *AMAZING.*
OH, DICK GRAYSON. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHO YOU ARE THE NEXT TIME WE MEET.
YOU KNOW WHAT, HELENA?

NEITHER CAN I.
Son.
Acrobat.
Sidekick.
Sensation.
Heir.
Protector.
Spy.
Savior.
Hero.
GRAYSON

JAMIN
2016


I'M GOIN' TO A PARTY...
...DRESSED UP NICE...
...GOT MY INVITATION...
...SOMETHING SOMETHING SLICE!
Ms. QUINN
ROOM 237. LOVE THE STYLE. TERRIBLE PART OF TOWN, THOUGH. I SHOULD PROBABLY KNOCK.
237
BUT I DID JUST GET MY NAILS DONE, SO...
23
KICK!

WHO IS AGENT 37?

STORY / JACKSON LANZING & COLLIN KELLY INTERSTITIALS ART / ROGE ANTONIO INTERSTITIALS COLORS / JEROMY COX
LETTERER / CARLOS M. MANGUAL

YIKES! I THOUGHT THIS WAS A PARTY, NOT A MEETING OF THE *BROODING BOYS BRIGADE!*

JOHN CONSTANTINE. Wizard. Like a very sexy, very angry Gandalf.

AZRAEL. Cyberpunk Holy Warrior. Pretty bad at small talk.

SIMON BAZ. Green Lantern of Earth. Has so many better things to do.

HARLEY QUINN. Not exactly used to this crowd.

I DON'T EVEN SEE THE *PUNCH AND PIE* I WAS PROMISED!

YOU'RE *JOKER'S* OLD BINT, RIGHT? MIGHT HAVE A *PUNCH* FOR YOU, BUT *PIE*? 'FRAID THAT'S A PASS, LOVE.

THAT'S *IT.* I'VE BEEN SITTING AROUND THIS FLOPHOUSE WAITING FOR *ANSWERS* AND IT TURNS OUT WE WERE JUST WAITING ON THE *CRAZIEST GIRL IN GOTHAM.* I'M *GONE.*

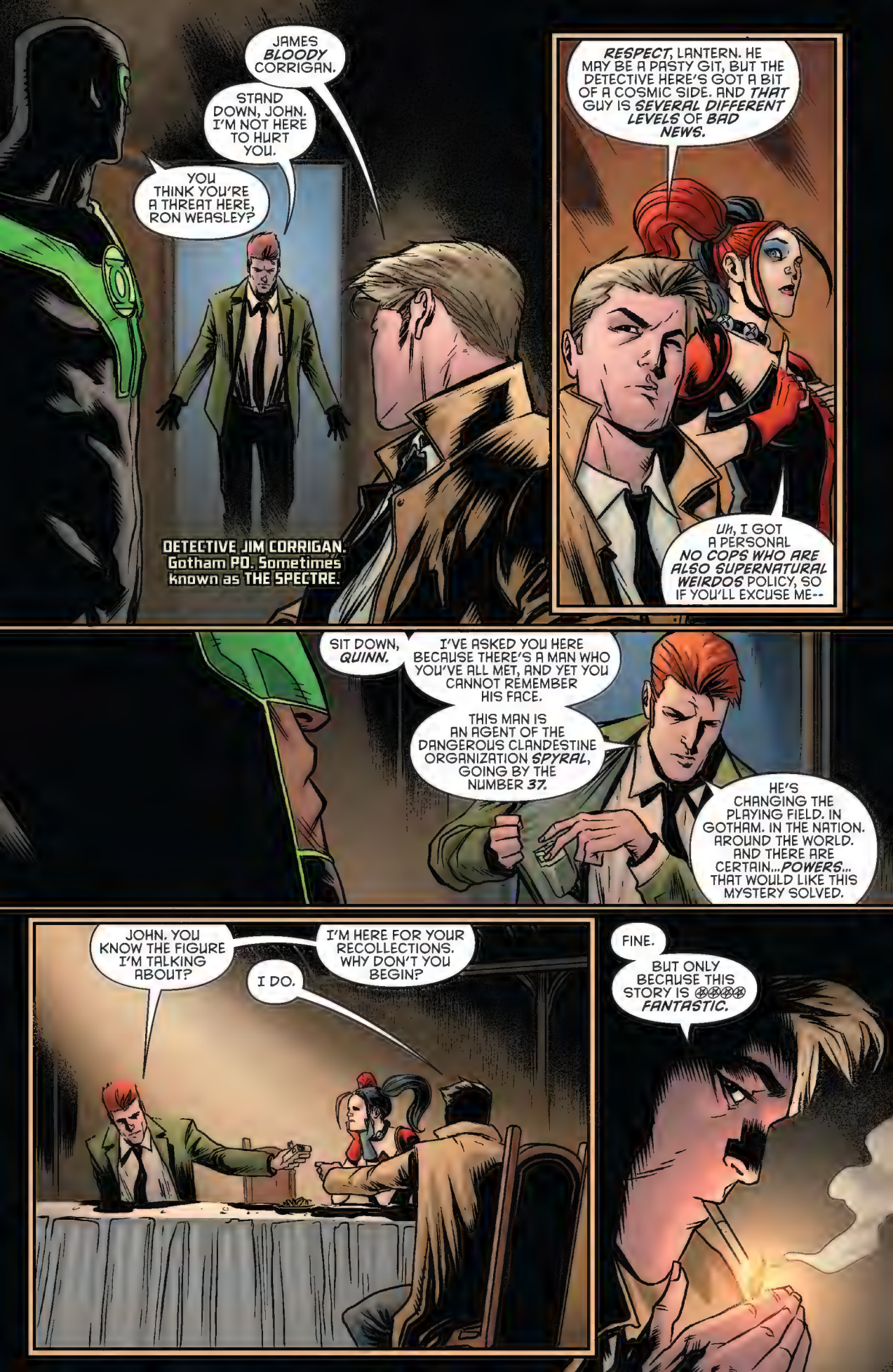
I AIN'T THE ONE YOU'RE WAITING FOR, LUCHA*DORK.*

I GOT THE LETTER JUST LIKE YOU, SO WHY DON'T YOU SLOW YOUR ROLL AND TELL ME WHAT THE *HELLO* IS GOING ON?

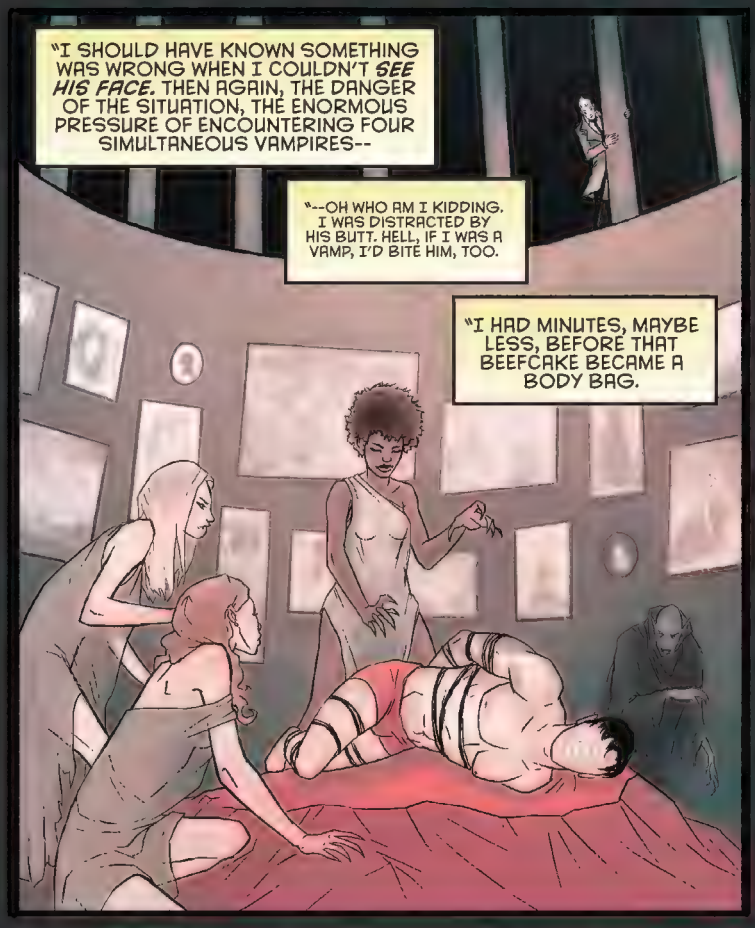
THE SUMMONER APPROACHES.

WE SHALL *SOON FIND OUT.*

CREEEEEK


JAMES BLOODY CORRIGAN.
STAND DOWN, JOHN. I'M NOT HERE TO HURT YOU.
YOU THINK YOU'RE A THREAT HERE, RON WEASLEY?
DETECTIVE JIM CORRIGAN. Gotham PD. Sometimes known as THE SPECTRE.
RESPECT, LANTERN. HE MAY BE A PASTY GIT, BUT THE DETECTIVE HERE'S GOT A BIT OF A COSMIC SIDE. AND THAT GUY IS SEVERAL DIFFERENT LEVELS OF BAD NEWS.
Uh, I GOT A PERSONAL NO COPS WHO ARE ALSO SUPERNATURAL WEIRDOS POLICY, SO IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME--
SIT DOWN, QUINN.
I'VE ASKED YOU HERE BECAUSE THERE'S A MAN WHO YOU'VE ALL MET, AND YET YOU CANNOT REMEMBER HIS FACE.
THIS MAN IS AN AGENT OF THE DANGEROUS CLANDESTINE ORGANIZATION SPYRAL, GOING BY THE NUMBER 37.
HE'S CHANGING THE PLAYING FIELD. IN GOTHAM. IN THE NATION. AROUND THE WORLD. AND THERE ARE CERTAIN...POWERS... THAT WOULD LIKE THIS MYSTERY SOLVED.
JOHN. YOU KNOW THE FIGURE I'M TALKING ABOUT?
I DO.
I'M HERE FOR YOUR RECOLLECTIONS. WHY DON'T YOU BEGIN?
FINE.
BUT ONLY BECAUSE THIS STORY IS ★★★★ FANTASTIC.

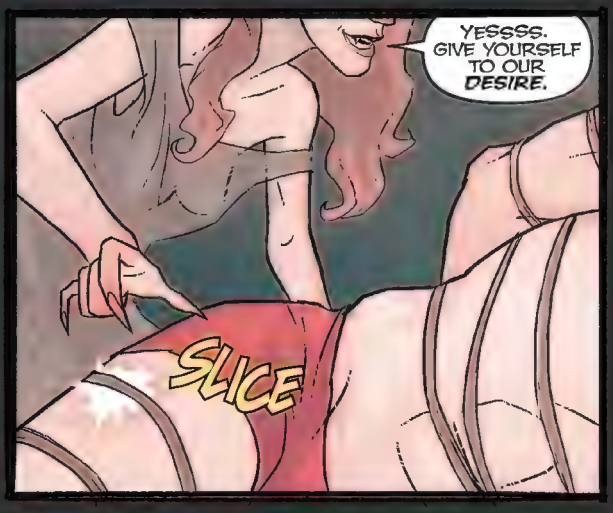
"THE MOON WAS *FULL*. THE MOORS WERE *BRILLIANT*.
"I WAS HAVING A *TRULY LIBERATING* MOMENT.
THE CHARMER
ART BY NATASHA ALTERICI
"BUT DEMONOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES WAIT FOR NO MAN.
ZIIIIIP
"SOME *LOCAL LADS* HAD *GONE MISSING*.
"RUMORS HAD REACHED ME AS FAR AS NEW YORK CITY. RUMORS WITH *POCKETBOOKS*.
"ONE DAY OF TRACKING THE ARCANE SCENT, AND I KNEW EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF *DARK HELL* I WAS MESSING WITH.
"FOR ALL THEIR SELF-AGGRANDIZING MYSTERY THEATER BOLLOCKS, *VAMPIRES* ARE SHOCKINGLY EASY TO PROFILE.
"I HAD IT *ALL* UNDER CONTROL. WALK IN THE BLOODY PARK.
"BUT I DIDN'T ACCOUNT FOR *HIM*."

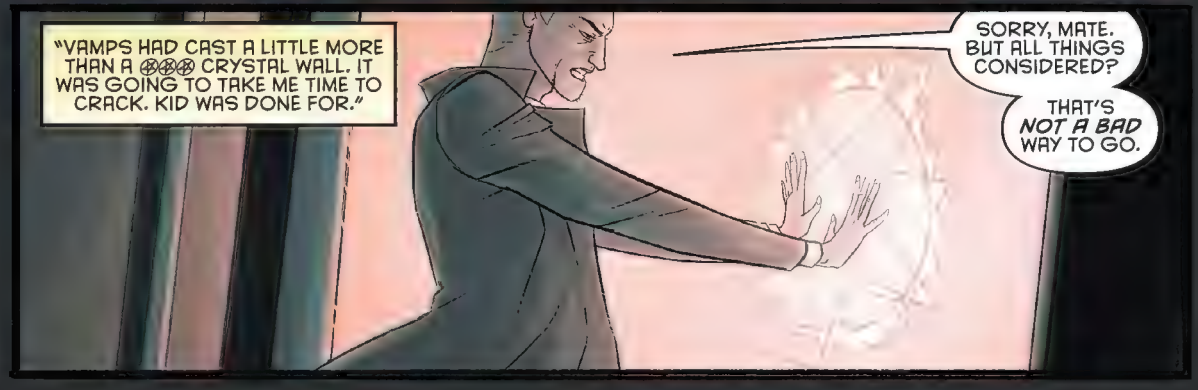

"I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN SOMETHING WAS WRONG WHEN I COULDN'T *SEE HIS FACE.* THEN AGAIN, THE DANGER OF THE SITUATION, THE ENORMOUS PRESSURE OF ENCOUNTERING FOUR SIMULTANEOUS VAMPIRES--
"--OH WHO AM I KIDDING. I WAS DISTRACTED BY HIS BUTT. HELL, IF I WAS A VAMP, I'D BITE HIM, TOO.
"I HAD MINUTES, MAYBE LESS, BEFORE THAT BEEFCAKE BECAME A BODY BAG.

THEY'VE CAST SHARDIK'S CRYSTAL WALL? VAMPIRES WITH SPELL BOOKS? BOLLOCKS TO THAT...
"SO I TRUSTED MY GUT.

"BIG MISTAKE."
UGH!

DREAM NOT OF FREEDOM, PRECIOUS ONE. WE ARE INSIDE YOUR MIIIIND...


YESSSS. GIVE YOURSELF TO OUR *DESIRE.*
SLICE


"VAMPS HAD CAST A LITTLE MORE THAN A ⊛⊛⊛ CRYSTAL WALL. IT WAS GOING TO TAKE ME TIME TO CRACK. KID WAS DONE FOR."
SORRY, MATE. BUT ALL THINGS CONSIDERED?
THAT'S *NOT A BAD* WAY TO GO.

MMMMHHHHH.
OOOOHHHH...
YOU ARE OURS, STRANGER...
IS HE SWEET, MY WIFE-DAUGHTERS?
IS HE LUSCIOUS?
HSSSSS.
I WILL TASTE HIS HEAT.

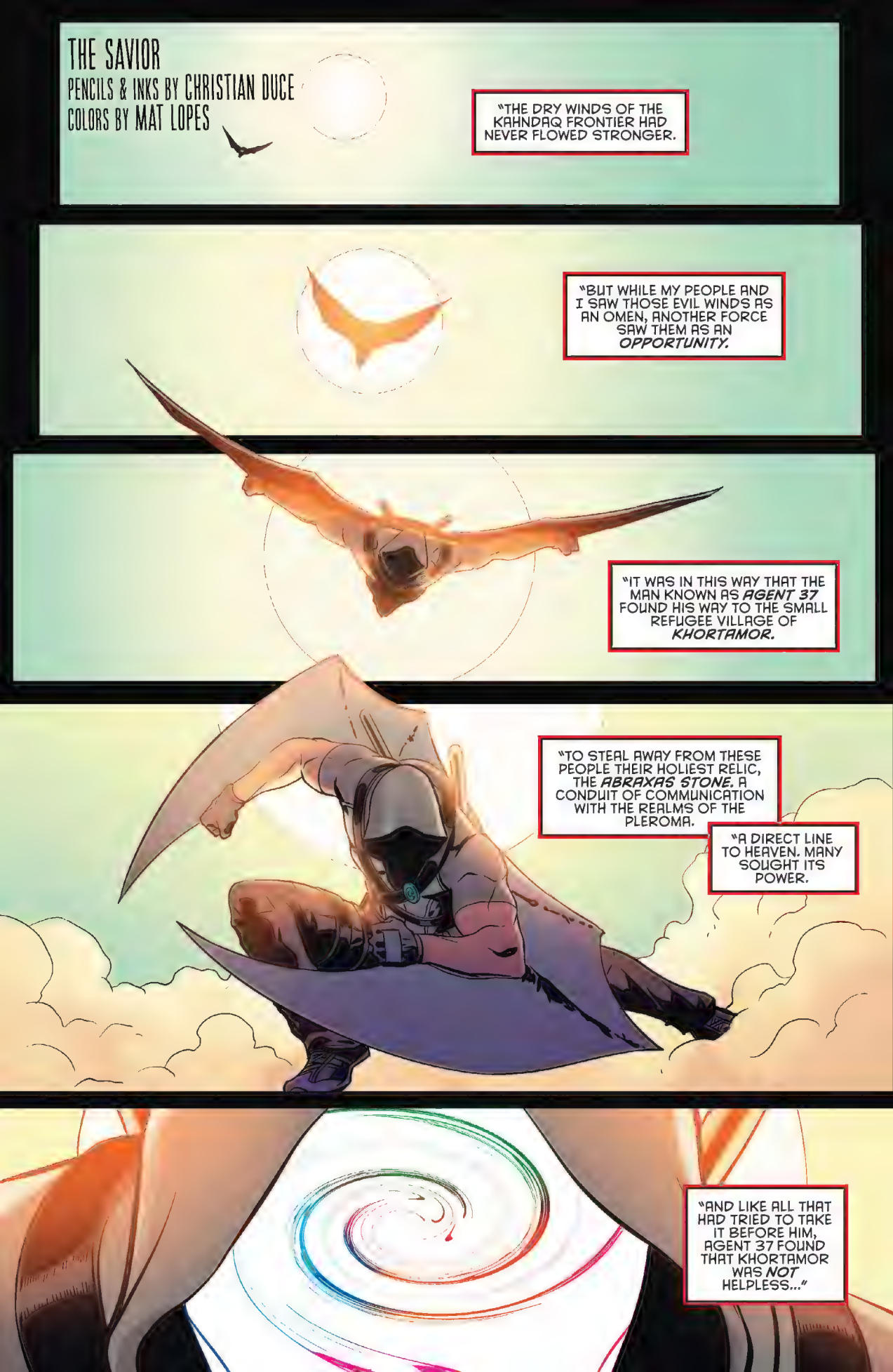
"LOOK, I'M NOT ONE OF YOU 'HEROES.' WHEN CONSTANTINE IS ON THE JOB, SOMETIMES THE JOB ONLY GETS DONE BY HALF. INNOCENT PEOPLE DIE, WHICH I ADMIT IS THE WORST, BUT THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH ONE INCREDIBLY HANDSOME MAN CAN DO.
"THIS WAS ONE OF THOSE CASES. THE VICTIM? DEAD. ME? JUST A LITTLE TOO SLOW."

"BUT I FOR DAMN SURE WASN'T GOING TO LET THE BLOODY BLOOD-SUCKERS GET AWAY WITH IT."
OY, DRACU-LA-DEE-DA AND THE YOU SUCK-UBI.
YOU LIKE THAT DARK AND STORMY? YOU'RE GOING TO LOVE THE BLOND.
YOU SMELL LIKE A TAP ROOM FLOOR.
WHY WOULD WE HAVE THE MUTTON, WHEN WE JUST HAD SPOTTED DICK?
WAITAMINUTE...
...HOW'D YOU GUESS MY NAME?

YOU MIGHT BE ALL-POWERFUL IMMORTALS, BUT YOU ACT LIKE HORMONAL TEENS.
YOU SAW THE MUSCLES AND THE SKIN. DIDN'T EVEN STOP TO WONDER WHY YOU COULDN'T MAKE OUT MY FACE?
IT'S CALLED HYPNOS. BASICALLY, A COLONY OF TINY MICROSCOPIC NANOTECH SPIDERS THAT LIVE IN MY BLOOD.
WHICH MEANS, NOW? THEY LIVE IN YOU.
"HELIOS."
AAAAAAHHHHHHH
THANK YOU FOR SUCH A LUSCIOUS...LAST... MEAL...
HAPPY TO OBLIGE, GRAMPS.

ALL RIGHT, THAT WAS SOME BEAUTIFUL BRUTALITY FOR A MOSTLY NAKED GENT IN A NEST OF VAMPIRES. WHAT ARE YOU?
WHO, ME?
JUST SOME GUY.
DON'T BE COY WITH ME, I'VE COYED WITH THE BEST OF 'EM. YOU FREELANCE?
MORE OF A KEPT MAN. HAD A MISSION, DID THE MISSION.
SO YOU'RE S.H.A.D.E. PITY. YOU'RE DAMNED HANDSOME FOR A FRANKENSTEIN.
YOU MAKE A LOT OF ASSUMPTIONS, DON'T YOU, JOHN CONSTANTINE? HOW'S THAT WORKING OUT FOR YOU?
Ugh. YOU'VE HEARD OF ME. THERE GOES MY COOL FACTOR.
WELL, IF YOU KNOW MY WAYS, THEN YOU'LL KNOW THAT I'M NOT A MAN WHO TAKES BEING ROBBED LIGHTLY. AND YOU? YOU JUST ROBBED ME OF MY SATISFACTION.
I'D LIKE TO KNOW, HOW EXACTLY DO YOU PLAN TO MAKE IT UP TO ME NEXT TIME?
THERE YOU GO AGAIN. ASSUMING THERE'LL BE A NEXT TIME.
MATRON? ONE FOR PICK- UP.
...
"SO THAT'S MY STORY."

AND THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN TURN THIS LITTLE SHINDIG INTO SOMETHING OTHER THAN A *COLOSSAL* WASTE OF MY TIME IS IF YOU WERE TO TELL ME THAT "*NEXT TIME*" IS *TODAY.*
AND IF *THAT* IS THE CASE, I HOPE YOU'RE ALL OVER EIGHTEEN, BECAUSE THIS IS GOING TO GET ADULT-RATED *VERY* FAST.
TAKE A SHOWER, JOHN.
AZRAEL. YOU WERE LISTENING?
I WAS. I KNOW BETTER THAN TO IGNORE WORDS SPOKEN IN YOUR PRESENCE.
DON'T THINK WE'VE MET. FACT, I THOUGHT YOU WERE A RUMOR UNTIL--
NOT YOU. YOUR OTHER FACE. *THE SPECTRE.*
I HAVE SEEN HIM IN MY DREAMS. MY FAITH, WE HAVE A NAME FOR HIM. *AEON.* ASPECT OF THE PLEROMA. DUALITY OF THE CHRISTOS.
FOR *HIM*, I WILL TELL MY STORY.
OKAY, THERE MIGHT NOT BE ANY *PUNCH*, BUT I'M PRETTY SURE *HE* DRANK THE *KOOL-AID.*
THE STORY OF *ALMANQIDH MAJHULI ALHUIA.*


THE SAVIOR
PENCILS & INKS BY CHRISTIAN DUCE
COLORS BY MAT LOPES
"THE DRY WINDS OF THE KAHNDAQ FRONTIER HAD NEVER FLOWED STRONGER.
"BUT WHILE MY PEOPLE AND I SAW THOSE EVIL WINDS AS AN OMEN, ANOTHER FORCE SAW THEM AS AN *OPPORTUNITY.*
"IT WAS IN THIS WAY THAT THE MAN KNOWN AS *AGENT 37* FOUND HIS WAY TO THE SMALL REFUGEE VILLAGE OF *KHORTAMOR.*
"TO STEAL AWAY FROM THESE PEOPLE THEIR HOLIEST RELIC, THE *ABRAXAS STONE,* A CONDUIT OF COMMUNICATION WITH THE REALMS OF THE PLEROMA.
"A DIRECT LINE TO HEAVEN. MANY SOUGHT ITS POWER.
"AND LIKE ALL THAT HAD TRIED TO TAKE IT BEFORE HIM, AGENT 37 FOUND THAT KHORTAMOR WAS *NOT* HELPLESS..."

"...IT WAS *PROTECTED.*"

THIS LAND IS *YOURS,* MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS! FIGHT FOR TRUTH AND KNOW WE WILL PREVAIL!

BUT THERE ARE SO MANY!

NUMBERS MEAN NOTHING IN THE FACE OF *RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

"THE PEOPLE OF KHORTAMOR WERE FATHERS. MOTHERS. CHILDREN. ALL DISPLACED BY THE ENCROACHING TIDE OF *SAINT DUMAS.*

"THE WAR WE FOUGHT WAS A HOLY ONE, BUT ALSO A *LOSING* ONE."

MATRON, I HAVE EYES ON THE *ABRAXAS STONE.*

YOUR INTEL WAS RIGHT ON, THIS PLACE IS A WAR ZONE. I SHOULD BE ABLE TO EXTRACT WITHOUT ALERTING EITHER SIDE.

LESS TALK, MORE ACTION, 37.

"HE COULD HAVE TAKEN IT EASILY. LEFT US TO DIE.

"AND WE WOULD HAVE.

"AND *YET.*"

THE ORDER OF SAINT DUMAS, RIGHT?
HEARD ABOUT YOU GUYS FROM SOME FRIENDS OF MINE/ RELIGIOUS ENTHUSIASTS WITH A VERY *MESSED-UP* MORAL CODE.
LOOKS LIKE THEIR DESCRIPTION WAS RIGHT ON THE MONEY.
I KNOW NOT WHO YOU ARE, FACELESS STRANGER, BUT I DO KNOW ONE THING.
THIS ISN'T YOUR FIGHT.
HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU, TALL-DARK-AND-AZRAEL...
...NOT ONLY HAVE WE MET BEFORE, BUT WHEN THIS MANY *INNOCENT* LIVES ARE AT STAKE?
IT ABSOLUTELY *IS* MY FIGHT.

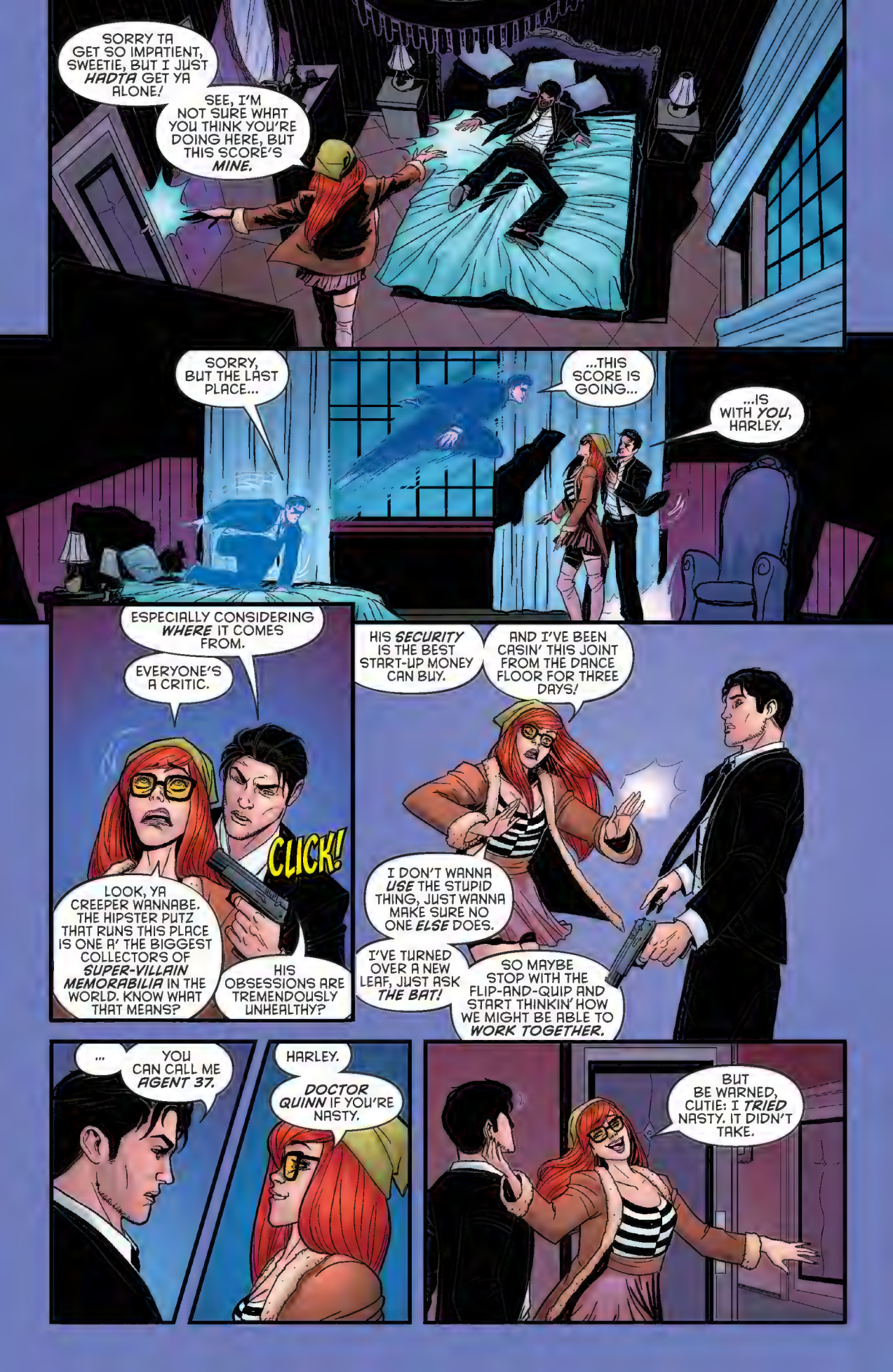
GIVE ME YOUR SWORD.
NO.
GIVE ME YOUR SWORD, PLEASE?
NEVER. THIS BLADE WAS FORGED BY THE GREATEST WEAPONS FORGE IN THE SECRET CITY OF GNOSIS--
PERFECT.
THEN IT SHOULD BE STRONG ENOUGH FOR THIS TO WORK.
SHUNK
YES! I SEE IT!
THEN GET IT DONE, LAWRENCE OF ARABIA--I ONLY KNOW SO MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF FLIPS!
HEAR ME, DUMAS! THE ABRAXAS STONE WILL NEVER BE YOURS!
IT WILL REMAIN HERE, WITH ITS PROTECTORS! WE ALONE WILL KNOW THE WILL OF HEAVEN...
...AND YOU WILL KNOW ONLY ITS WRATH!

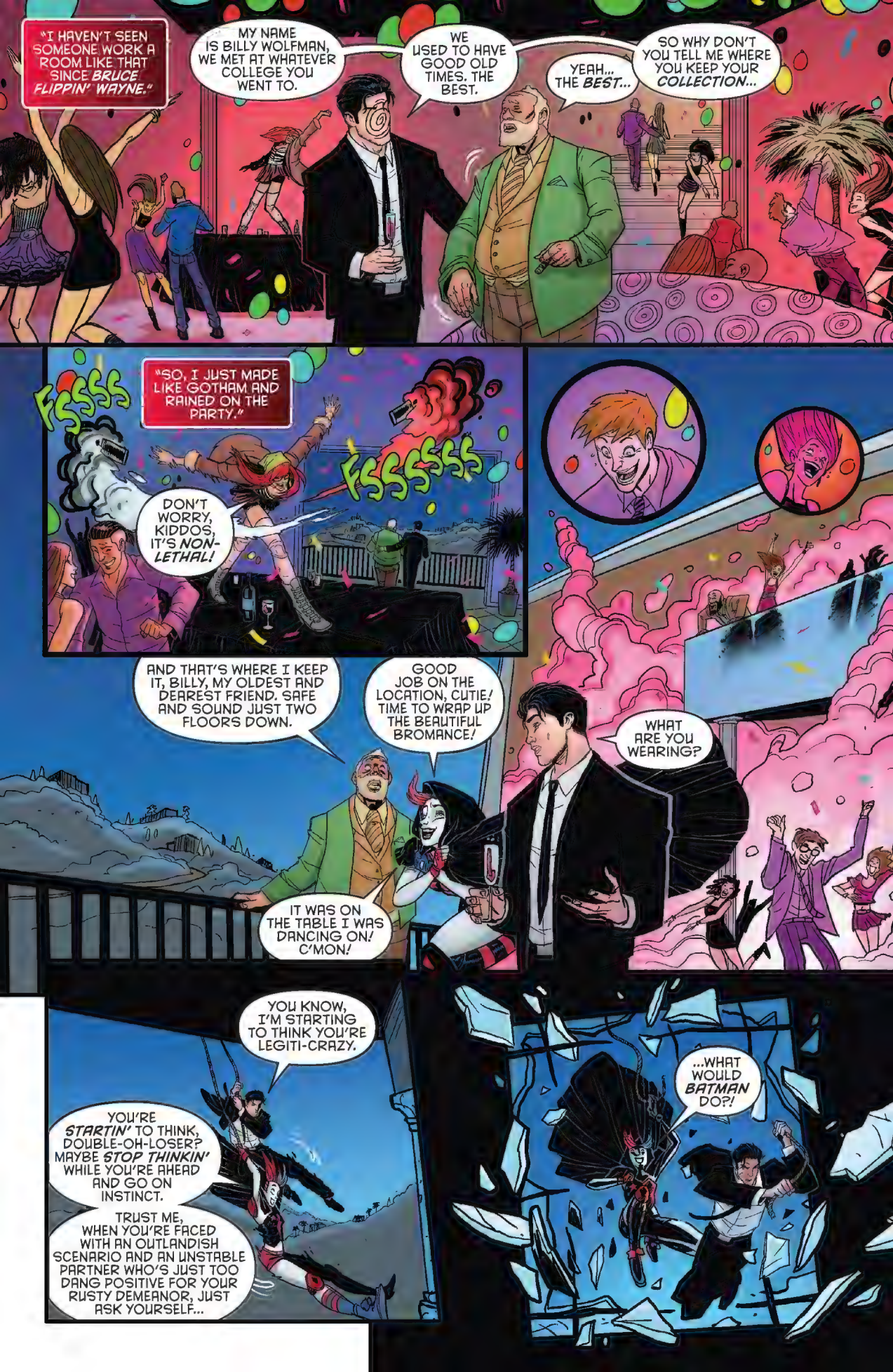
"AND SO IT *WAS.*
"A TWO-MAN WAR.
"A BATTLE NOT SEEN IN THOSE LANDS SINCE THE DAYS OF TETH-ADAM.
"A FIGHT TO MAKE THE ARCHON WEEP OCEANS.
"AND A *VICTORY* TO MAKE THE PLEROMA SING."
WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR FIGHT, BUT I KNOW WHY YOU TRULY CAME HERE.
I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO SEE YOUR FACE, BUT I CAN SEE THE TRUTH OF YOU. *SPY.*
YOU'RE NOT WRONG. I WAS SENT FOR YOUR STONE.

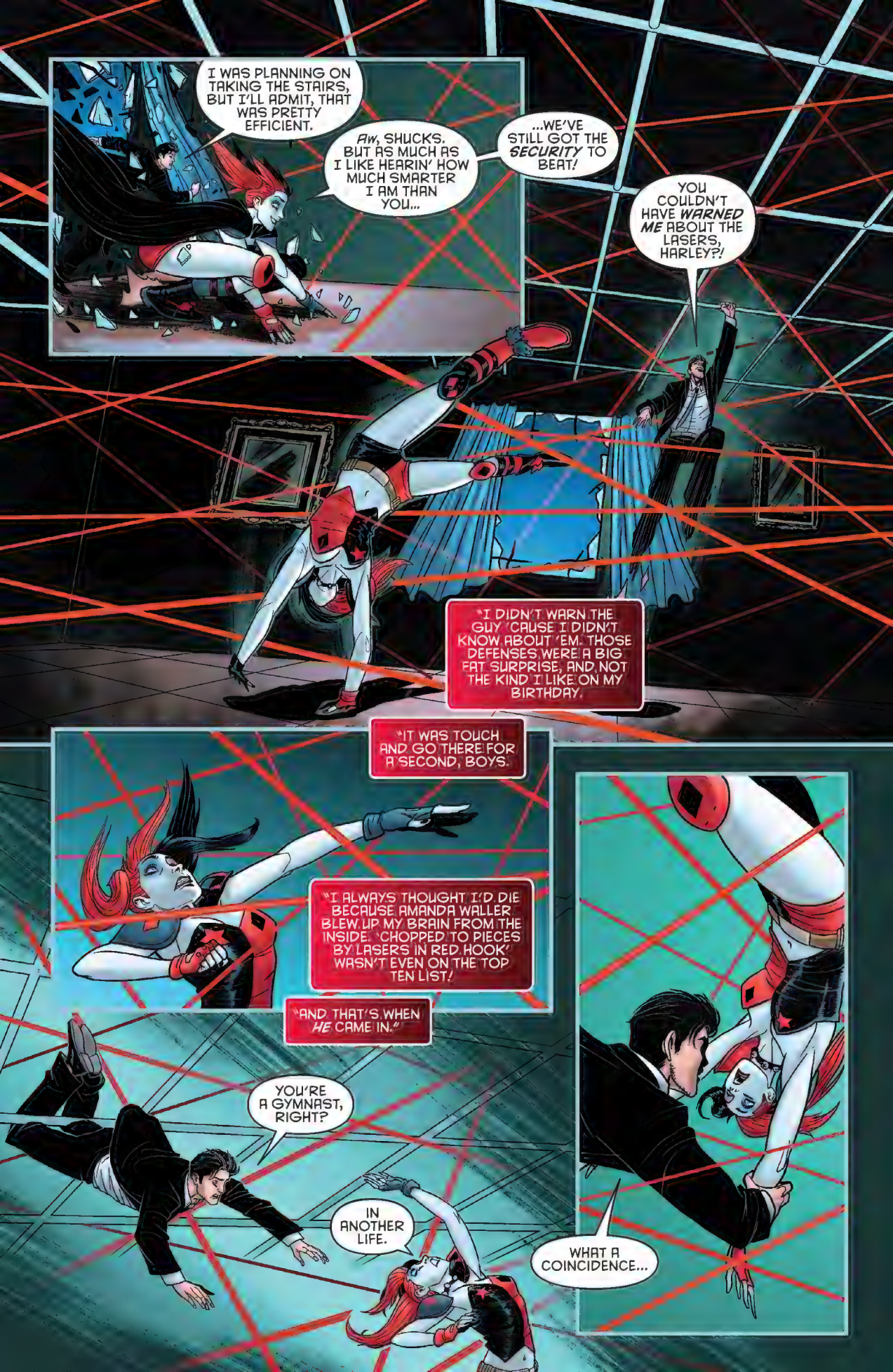
TOO BAD IT DIDN'T SURVIVE THE BATTLE.
"AS THE DRY WINDS OF KAHNDAQ CEASED THEIR ASSAULT, THE MAN KNOWN AS AGENT 37 WALKED BACK INTO THE DESERT FROM WHENCE HE CAME.
"I WATCHED HIM UNTIL THE HORIZON SWALLOWED HIS FIGURE IN DUST AND SKY.
"MY PEOPLE MUTTERED A NAME FOR HIM. ALMANQIDH MAJHULI ALHUIA. 'THE FACELESS SAVIOR.'
"THE MAN WHO CAME TO DESTROY OUR QUEST...
"...BUT INSTEAD HELPED US REVIVE IT.
"THE SELFISH MAN WHO ACTED WITH SELFLESSNESS.
ΑΒΡΙΑΣ
"THE LIAR WHO HELPED LEAD US TO TRUTH."

I NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN. I KNOW NOTHING MORE OF AGENT 37.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR *TRUTH*, JEAN-PAUL.
IS IT MY TURN?
AFTER THAT HEAVY BIBLE PSALM, I *SERIOUSLY* THINK IT SHOULD BE MY TURN.
DID THE STRANGER HELP YOU ALONG YOUR PATH TO UNDERSTAND YOUR PLACE IN THE UNIVERSE, AS HE DID ME?
NO.
WELL, YES, ACTUALLY, A LITTLE BIT.
I UNDERSTAND YOU CROSSED PATHS IN NEW YORK, HARLEY. AT SOME KIND OF...EVENT?
YEAH.
BUT *PATHS* WEREN'T THE ONLY THING WE *CROSSED*.
WINK!

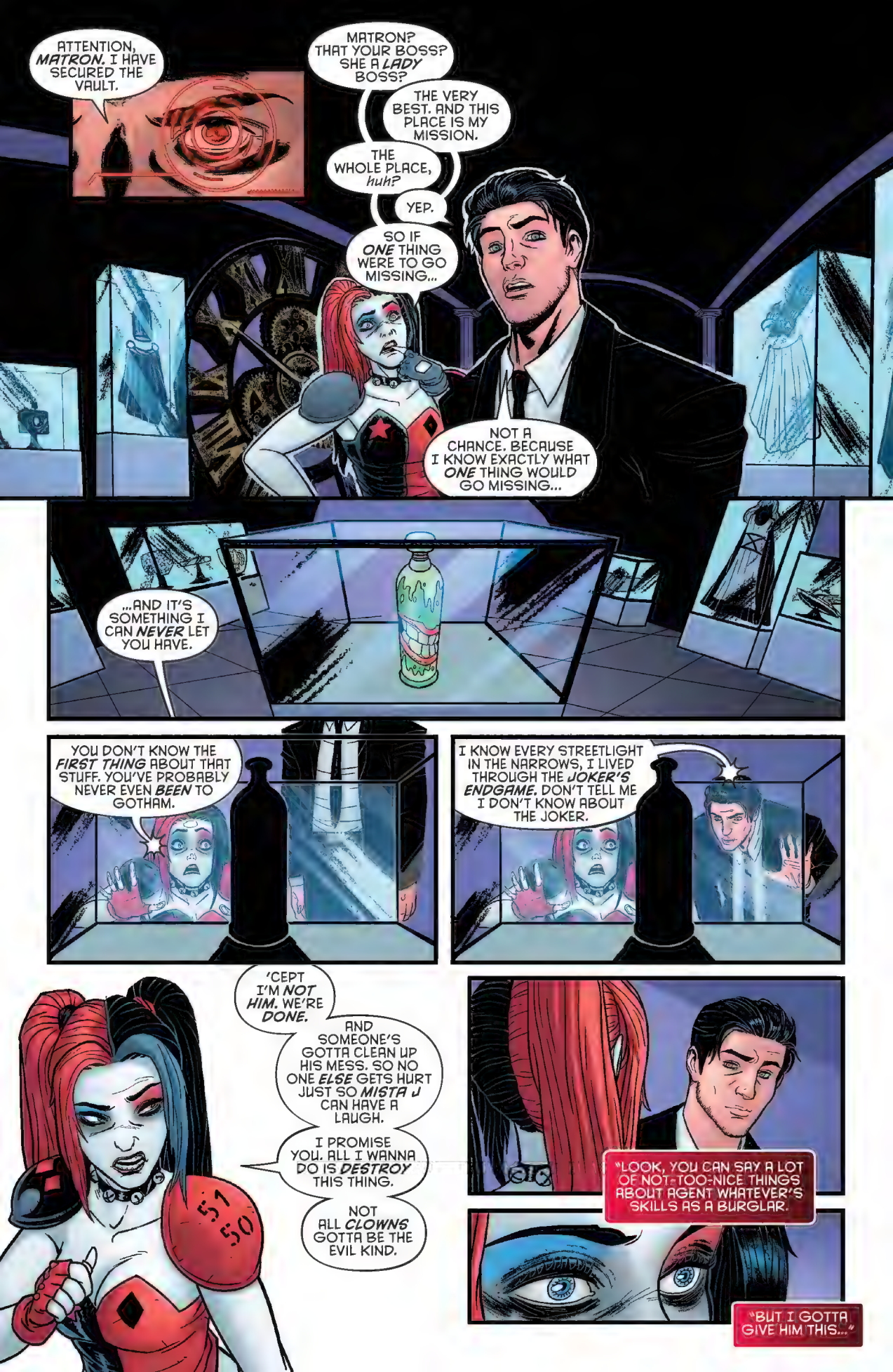
"IT WAS THE PARTY OF THE CENTURY FOR THE THIRD DAY IN A ROW. ALL PRETTY-BOY INVESTMENT BANKERS AND BROOKLYN SOCIALITES FAKIN' THEY COULD SHAKE LIKE BEYONCÉ.
"BASICALLY, IT WAS THE KIND OF BASH THAT MAKES YA WANNA BASH YER OWN BRAINS IN.
THE GYMNAST
PENCILS & INKS BY FLAVIANO
COLORS BY JEROMY COX
"BUT I HAD MY EYE ON SOMETHIN' ELSE. SOMETHIN' *SECRET*.
"AND I WASN'T THE *ONLY* ONE.
"HIS SUIT FIT TOO GOOD, HE MOVED THROUGH THE CROWD LIKE CASPER THE FRIENDLY GHOST...
"...AND HIS *FACE* WAS A FREAKIN' *SPIRAL*.
"SO THAT SET OFF SOME ALARMS.
"I KNOW FROM *CREEPS*, AND I KNOW WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU GOT ONE CHECKIN' OUT YOUR TAIL.
"STEP ONE: GET TO CHECKING OUT *THEIR* TAIL. AND STEP TWO..."
...SURPRISE!
YOINK


SORRY TA GET SO IMPATIENT, SWEETIE, BUT I JUST *HADTA* GET YA ALONE!
SEE, I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING HERE, BUT THIS SCORE'S *MINE.*
SORRY, BUT THE LAST PLACE...
...THIS SCORE IS GOING...
...IS WITH *YOU*, HARLEY.
ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING *WHERE* IT COMES FROM.
EVERYONE'S A CRITIC.
CLICK!
LOOK, YA CREEPER WANNABE. THE HIPSTER PUTZ THAT RUNS THIS PLACE IS ONE A' THE BIGGEST COLLECTORS OF *SUPER-VILLAIN MEMORABILIA* IN THE WORLD. KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?
HIS OBSESSIONS ARE TREMENDOUSLY UNHEALTHY?
HIS *SECURITY* IS THE BEST START-UP MONEY CAN BUY.
AND I'VE BEEN CASIN' THIS JOINT FROM THE DANCE FLOOR FOR THREE DAYS!
I DON'T WANNA *USE* THE STUPID THING, JUST WANNA MAKE SURE NO ONE *ELSE* DOES.
I'VE TURNED OVER A NEW LEAF, JUST ASK *THE BAT!*
SO MAYBE STOP WITH THE FLIP-AND-QUIP AND START THINKIN' HOW WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO *WORK TOGETHER.*
...
YOU CAN CALL ME *AGENT 37.*
HARLEY.
DOCTOR QUINN IF YOU'RE NASTY.
BUT BE WARNED, CUTIE: I *TRIED* NASTY. IT DIDN'T TAKE.


"I HAVEN'T SEEN SOMEONE WORK A ROOM LIKE THAT SINCE BRUCE FLIPPIN' WAYNE."
MY NAME IS BILLY WOLFMAN, WE MET AT WHATEVER COLLEGE YOU WENT TO.
WE USED TO HAVE GOOD OLD TIMES. THE BEST.
YEAH... THE BEST...
SO WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHERE YOU KEEP YOUR COLLECTION...
"SO, I JUST MADE LIKE GOTHAM AND RAINED ON THE PARTY."
FSSSS
FSSSSSS
DON'T WORRY, KIDDOS, IT'S NON-LETHAL!
AND THAT'S WHERE I KEEP IT, BILLY, MY OLDEST AND DEAREST FRIEND. SAFE AND SOUND JUST TWO FLOORS DOWN.
GOOD JOB ON THE LOCATION, CUTIE! TIME TO WRAP UP THE BEAUTIFUL BROMANCE!
IT WAS ON THE TABLE I WAS DANCING ON! C'MON!
WHAT ARE YOU WEARING?
YOU KNOW, I'M STARTING TO THINK YOU'RE LEGITI-CRAZY.
YOU'RE STARTIN' TO THINK, DOUBLE-OH-LOSER? MAYBE STOP THINKIN' WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD AND GO ON INSTINCT.
TRUST ME, WHEN YOU'RE FACED WITH AN OUTLANDISH SCENARIO AND AN UNSTABLE PARTNER WHO'S JUST TOO DANG POSITIVE FOR YOUR RUSTY DEMEANOR, JUST ASK YOURSELF...
...WHAT WOULD BATMAN DO?!


I WAS PLANNING ON TAKING THE STAIRS, BUT I'LL ADMIT, THAT WAS PRETTY EFFICIENT.
Aw, SHUCKS. BUT AS MUCH AS I LIKE HEARIN' HOW MUCH SMARTER I AM THAN YOU...
...WE'VE STILL GOT THE SECURITY TO BEAT!
YOU COULDN'T HAVE WARNED ME ABOUT THE LASERS, HARLEY?!
"I DIDN'T WARN THE GUY 'CAUSE I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT 'EM. THOSE DEFENSES WERE A BIG FAT SURPRISE, AND NOT THE KIND I LIKE ON MY BIRTHDAY.
"IT WAS TOUCH AND GO THERE FOR A SECOND, BOYS.
"I ALWAYS THOUGHT I'D DIE BECAUSE AMANDA WALLER BLEW UP MY BRAIN FROM THE INSIDE. 'CHOPPED TO PIECES BY LASERS IN RED HOOK' WASN'T EVEN ON THE TOP TEN LIST.
"AND THAT'S WHEN HE CAME IN."
YOU'RE A GYMNAST, RIGHT?
IN ANOTHER LIFE.
WHAT A COINCIDENCE...

...ME, TOO.


ATTENTION, MATRON. I HAVE SECURED THE VAULT.
MATRON? THAT YOUR BOSS? SHE A LADY BOSS?
THE VERY BEST. AND THIS PLACE IS MY MISSION.
THE WHOLE PLACE, huh?
YEP.
SO IF ONE THING WERE TO GO MISSING...
NOT A CHANCE. BECAUSE I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT ONE THING WOULD GO MISSING...
...AND IT'S SOMETHING I CAN NEVER LET YOU HAVE.
YOU DON'T KNOW THE FIRST THING ABOUT THAT STUFF. YOU'VE PROBABLY NEVER EVEN BEEN TO GOTHAM.
I KNOW EVERY STREETLIGHT IN THE NARROWS, I LIVED THROUGH THE JOKER'S ENDGAME. DON'T TELL ME I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE JOKER.
'CEPT I'M NOT HIM. WE'RE DONE.
AND SOMEONE'S GOTTA CLEAN UP HIS MESS. SO NO ONE ELSE GETS HURT JUST SO MISTA J CAN HAVE A LAUGH.
I PROMISE YOU. ALL I WANNA DO IS DESTROY THIS THING.
NOT ALL CLOWNS GOTTA BE THE EVIL KIND.
"LOOK, YOU CAN SAY A LOT OF NOT-TOO-NICE THINGS ABOUT AGENT WHATEVER'S SKILLS AS A BURGLAR.
"BUT I GOTTA GIVE HIM THIS..."

"HE WAS A PHENOMENAL KISSER."
THANKS FOR THE DANCE, SWEETIE! SEE YA ON THE NEXT BIG EVENT TEAM-UP!
"A GREAT PARTY. A HANDSOME BOY. A WHIRLWIND ROMANCE.
"IF I'M REALLY BEING *HONEST* WITH MYSELF..."

...IT WAS THE SINGLE BEST DATE OF MY LIFE!
NOW, THE SECOND-BEST DATE WAS THAT TIME ME AND MISTA J--
SHUT. UP.
WHILE YOU'VE ALL BEEN RELIVING THE MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR, MY RING'S CRISIS NETWORK IS REACHING DOUBLE DIGITS.
I'M THE GREEN LANTERN OF EARTH. YOU WANT MY AGENT 37 STORY, FINE. BUT THEN I NEED TO GO DO MY DAMN JOB.
AGENT 37 IS A DANGEROUS ROGUE ELEMENT, MISTER BAZ. ANY CLUE YOU CAN GIVE ME TO HIS IDENTITY COULD SAVE COUNTLESS LIVES.
PLEASE. JUST TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW.
...
WELL, I KNOW HE'D TELL ME I'M DOING THIS ALL WRONG.

NO MORE WARNINGS!
KRACAK!
"PARADEMONS HAD BEEN DEPLOYING GLOBALLY EN MASSE FOR NEARLY A WEEK. NO SIGNS OF STOPPING.
"AND IT WAS MY SECOND WEEK ON THE JOB.
THE SUPERHERO
PENCILS & INKS BY JAVIER FERNANDEZ
COLORS BY CHRIS SOTOMAYOR
YOU--
--STAY--
--DOWN.
BLAM BLAM BLAM
"I WAS A LITTLE... STRESSED-OUT."
I THINK YOU MADE YOUR POINT.
"HE WAS THE EXACT OPPOSITE."

GOT SOME STONES TO SNEAK UP ON A LANTERN, MYSTERY MAN.
I'M JUST IN AWE. "USE A GUN." WHY DID NO ONE ELSE EVER THINK OF THAT?
PLENTY DO. BUT I'VE GOT THE BADGE.
TECHNICALLY, YOU'VE GOT THE *LANTERN.*
WHATEVER.
YOU'VE BEEN PUTTING DOWN PARADEMONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. YOUR RING HAS TO BE RUNNING LOW. I'M GUESSING THAT'S WHY YOU WENT OLD SCHOOL. RESPECT.
LISTEN, *FACEMAN,* THERE'S SOME APOKOLIPTIC TROUBLE BREWING, AND I GOT A FEELING YOU'RE NOT JUST A CONCERNED CITIZEN. WHAT'S YOUR PLAY HERE?
COME AND GET IT, MONSTER!
FOR NOW? HOW ABOUT *HELPING THE HELPLESS.*
MONSTER, EAT ME, *I DARE YOU!* MY OLD BONES WILL BREAK EVERY TOOTH IN YOUR HEAD!
DON'T WORRY, MA'AM.
NO EVIL SHALL ESCAPE MY SIGHT.
WUMPH

HEY, BIG HERO. I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANYTHING IN THE OATH ABOUT A BODY COUNT.
THEY'RE PARADEMONS. I'VE SEEN SUPERMAN MOW THEM DOWN BY THE THOUSANDS.
MAYBE IN A WAR ZONE. WHICH THIS ISN'T.
YOU'RE WRONG, STRANGER. I'VE BEEN AWAKE FOR FIFTY-THREE HOURS. FLOWN FROM GOTHAM TO COAST CITY.
ONE AFTER ANOTHER AFTER ANOTHER. FOR EVERY FREAK I PUT DOWN, ANOTHER POPS UP. WHATEVER THEY'RE PLANNING, IT'S BIG.
EVERYONE ELSE IS OFF-PLANET-- IT'S LIKE APOKOLIPS KNEW I'D BE THE ONLY LANTERN LEFT TO PROTECT EARTH.
BUT YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY HERO. AND THIS ISN'T THE ONLY WAY.
Um, MISTER SUPER GUYS? THE FROG THING... IT'S GETTING AWAY?
AH MAN. I'VE BEEN LECTURED BY THE BEST, AND EVEN THEY DON'T LET THE MONSTER GET AWAY.
ANY OF THOSE HAPPEN TO BE A GROUCHY DETECTIVE WITH CUTE LITTLE EARS?
MAYBE.
WONDER WHAT HE WOULD MAKE OF A DEMON THAT RUNS AWAY?
HE WOULD WONDER WHERE IT'S GOING.
NOW THAT'S A QUESTION WORTH ASKING.

KRASSHHH
THE GREEN BURNING! IT FINDS US!
PANIC NOT! INTO THE TUBE, WORMS. WE SHALL FIND OTHER MEATS FOR GREAT DARKSEID!
SEE...
...THIS IS WHY WE LET THEM RUN.
BOOMTUBES! NO WONDER THEY WERE MOVING SO FAST!
TAKE IT FROM SOMEONE WHO'S HEARD THE SAME LECTURES.
"TO PROTECT THE PLANET, YOU'VE GOT TO PROTECT THE CITIES. TO THINK GLOBAL, YOU'VE GOT TO THINK LOCAL."
FILE THAT UNDER "SONGS I'VE HEARD."
THEN LIVE IT. WHEN YOU'RE RUN RAGGED PUTTING OUT FIRES?
YOUR HEAD WILL BE MINE!
THUNK
HRK
WHEN THERE'RE TOO MANY TO SAVE, TOO MUCH SCREAMING.
YOUR-- I SAID, YOUR--
--STOP LEAPING!
STOP LOOKING AT THE SMOKE.

AND FOCUS ON THE *FLAME.*
THWAK
YOU KNOW, THAT WAS A *FURY,* ONE OF DARKSEID'S ELITE.
WAS SHE? DIDN'T NOTICE.
I *DID* SEE YOU TAKE SIX PARADEMONS DOWN. *WITHOUT* YOUR GLOCK.
I ONLY USE THE GUN WHEN I NEED *BACKUP.*
BUT WITH *YOU* AT MY BACK...
CLK
SWSH
LOOK, I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR *NAME,* BUT MOST LANTERNS HAVE A *PARTNER.* I WAS THINKING, IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE AROUND...
NOPE, YOU'RE GONE.
AAAAND YOU TOOK THE *FATHER BOX.*
WHICH IS WHAT YOU PROBABLY *CAME FOR* TO BEGIN WITH.
RING, DELETE THIS FROM THE RECORDS.
THIS CAN BE ONE OF THOSE *SECRET ADVENTURES* THAT NO ONE EVER NEEDS TO HEAR.
"HE WAS A TRICKSTER, A THIEF, AND HE DIDN'T KNOW WHEN TO SHUT UP.
"BUT HE WAS STILL A BETTER HERO THAN ME, EVEN WITHOUT A RING."

CHARMER.
SAVIOR.
GYMNAST.
SUPERHERO.
IN POLICING, THESE ARE WHAT WE CALL *IDENTIFYING FEATURES.* THEY TELL US EVERYTHING WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MAN BEHIND THE SPIRAL, IF ONLY WE DARE TO LOOK.
AGENT 37 MAY BE A MAN WITHOUT A *FACE*, BUT HE IS NOT WITHOUT A *PERSONALITY.* HE KNEW EACH OF YOU ENOUGH TO INTERACT WITH YOU.
I THINK THAT BEHIND THAT FORGOTTEN VISAGE IS A MAN YOU ALL *KNOW.* ONE WE CAN IDENTIFY...
...IF ONLY WE DARE TO ASK THE *QUESTION.*
WHO IS AGENT 37?

DICK GRAYSON.
DICK GRAYSON.
DICK GRAYSON!
SORRY, WHO?
BINGO.

NICE TO SEE YOU ALL AGAIN.
I KNEW IT.
ALMANQIDH MAJHULI ALHUIA.
OH MY GOSH! I KISSED A G-G-G-GHOST!
OKAY, RING, WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE?
CALM IT, GUYS. CALL OFF THE BACKUP, SIMON.
I'LL TRADE YOU A DISARM FOR AN EXPLANATION.
SURE. GOOD TRADE. JUST SIT DOWN.
I DIDN'T DIE WHEN THE CRIME SYNDICATE UNMASKED ME AS NIGHTWING. I'VE BEEN WORKING AS A SUPER-SPY.
THE REASON YOU CAN'T REMEMBER MY FACE? THE HYPNOS.
LIKE I TOLD JOHN BACK IN ENGLAND, THEY'RE IN MY BLOOD. BUT THEY'RE ALSO ON MY SKIN. ON MY HANDS.
SEE, I KNEW IF YOU THOUGHT ON IT HARD ENOUGH--ANY OF YOU--YOU COULD FIGURE OUT IT WAS MY FACE BEHIND THE SPIRAL.
WHICH WOULDN'T JUST AFFECT ME. IT'D ENDANGER PEOPLE I CARE FOR. IT WOULD ENDANGER BATMAN.
SO, I BROUGHT YOU HERE. HAD YOU TELL YOUR STORIES. AND WHILE YOUR MINDS DID THE WORK DRUDGING UP THE MEMORIES...

"THE HYPNOS WENT TO WORK ON US."
"DON'T WORRY. IT'S NOT PERMANENT.
"YOU'RE EACH INFECTED JUST ENOUGH TO GET WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE...
"...DONE."
YOU PUT ROBOTS IN MY BLOOD? ON THE *SECOND DATE?!*
THE LUNATIC SPEAKS THE TRUTH.
AND NOW WHAT? *"HELIOS?"* YOU PLANNING ON BURNING US ALIVE, DICK GRAYSON?
NO. I HAVE ANOTHER WORD IN MIND.
I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS. I WISH THERE WERE ANOTHER WAY. I HAD FUN ON THOSE ADVENTURES...
...BUT I *CAN'T* LEAVE A TRACE.
TSUCHIGUMO.

"IT'S DONE, MATRON."
THEIR MEMORIES OF AGENT 37 ARE GONE. NOT JUST THE EVENTS IN THAT ROOM, BUT EVERYTHING THEY MIGHT HAVE REMEMBERED.
EXCELLENT WORK. I KNOW THAT CAN'T HAVE BEEN EASY FOR YOU.
I'D FORGOTTEN WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE IN A ROOM FULL OF SUPERHEROES. TO BE COUNTED AS PART OF THAT COMMUNITY, SURROUNDED BY FRIENDS.
I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING. "THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS FRIENDS IN THE SPY GAME, GRAYSON."
THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS THINKING AT ALL.
NO?
NO, DICK.
I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT HOW LONG IT'S BEEN SINCE WE DID A MISSION. JUST THE TWO OF US. LISTENING TO ALL OF THOSE STORIES...
HELENA BERTINELLI. ARE YOU ADVENTURE JEALOUS?
NEVER. MAYBE A LITTLE.
THEN YOU'RE IN LUCK. THIS IS GOTHAM CITY. THIS PLACE IS PRACTICALLY BUILT ON ADVENTURE.
LET'S GO FIND THE NEXT ONE TOGETHER.
THE END

VARIANT COVER GALLERY

GRAYSON #17
VARIANT BY
NEAL ADAMS, TOM PALMER
AND NATHAN FAIRBAIRN

GRAYSON #18
SUPERMAN V BATMAN
VARIANT BY STEPHEN PLATT

GRAYSON #19
VARIANT BY
JOHN ROMITA JR.,
DANNY MIKI AND
LAURA MARTIN

SPLATT

JR
15

NIGHTWING
REBIRTH
fdez 2016

The future (and past) of the DC Universe starts with DC UNIVERSE: REBIRTH!

Explore the changing world of Dick Grayson in this special bonus preview of NIGHTWING: REBIRTH #1.

GOTHAM CITY.
Nightwing.
Do you know where that name came from? Most people think it's a "Batman" thing, Y'know, **Former Robin** emulating his former mentor because bats go out at **night.** They've got **wings.** It makes sense.
But actually, it comes from **Superman.** See, **Big Blue** told me about these legendary heroes from his home planet, **Nightwing** and **Flamebird.**
The Nightwing was "The great rebuilder. The catalyst of change."
"Eternally reborn to start anew."
I lost that name when I went undercover in the spy organization **SPYRAL.** I can't take it back. Not yet. I have to do something first.
And just so you know, that something isn't stopping the **Madmen** from using a crane to break into the Federal Reserve. I'm on my way to meet someone.
Because I may have lost Nightwing, but I never lost--

9 - FN
10 - FN
11 - NF
12 - MC
13 - ME
14 - DIC_
15 - ME
16 - FN
17 - ME
18 - TV

THE SECRET HEADQUARTERS ARCADE. TODAY.

--D. I. C. K.

I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN OUT OF THE COUNTRY, BUT BEING NUMBER FOURTEEN IN THE TOP SCORES REQUIRES ONLY YOUR INITIALS.

APOKALIPS NAH

AVATAR

UNKY

PANDA

HEY, I'M NOT SUFFERING FROM CULTURE SHOCK, DAMIAN.

Current ***Robin.*** ***Son of Batman.*** *Sayer of snarky stuff like--*

THE MADMEN MUST HAVE DAMAGED YOUR BRAIN WITH THEIR COLORFUL FISTS THEN.

Nah, IT JUST FEELS GREAT TO HAVE A SECRET IDENTITY THAT'S ACTUALLY A ***SECRET*** AGAIN.

"I'M ***DICK GRAYSON.***" *Ah.* IT FEELS GOOD JUST TO SAY IT OUT LOUD.

WHEN I WAS WITH THE ***CIRCUS***, MY ***PARENTS*** WOULD TAKE ME HERE JUST ABOUT EVERY TIME WE CAME THROUGH ***GOTHAM.***

SOMETIMES IT WAS BECAUSE I'D CAUGHT THE TRAPEZE BAR WITH MY ***FACE***, AND THEY WANTED TO MAKE ME FEEL BETTER.

SOMETIMES IT WAS A BRIBE TO GET ME TO DO SOMETHING I ***DIDN'T WANT*** TO DO.

CHEESE VIKING

HEY, THIS IS YOUR FAVORITE GAME, RIGHT?

Hrm.

INSERT COIN

BUT MOSTLY IT WAS A REWARD. FOR PRACTICING HARD. FOR BEING SLIGHTLY ***LESS*** OF A PAIN IN THE ASS THAN USUAL.

DIDN'T COME HERE MUCH AFTER ***BRUCE*** TOOK ME IN.

MY ***FATHER*** IS NOT BIG ON REWARDS.

OR YOU PLAYING VIDEO GAMES.

YES. YOU RISK FATHER'S WRATH BY BRINGING ME HERE. SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND, RICHARD?

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN ONE OF THOSE "TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS" TYPES.

ARE YOU HAVING DIFFICULTIES WITH A FEMALE, AS USUAL? PERHAPS THAT ***HELENA BERTINELLI*** WOMAN FROM ***SPYRAL?***

FACE MY WRATH, GORGONZOLA TROLL!

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HELENA WAS A LIE WRAPPED IN A SECRET. IT WAS LIKE A CHINESE FINGER TRAP MADE OUT OF ***IKEA*** INSTRUCTIONS.

I DON'T KNOW IF IT QUALIFIES AS ONE OF MY USUAL "FEMALE DIFFICULTIES."

Hm. DO YOU THINK SHE'LL KEEP IN TOUCH?

I DON'T KNOW. EVERYTHING CHANGED AFTER ***DR. DAEDALUS*** MESSED AROUND WITH OUR HEADS.

HELENA'S REASON FOR BEING PART OF ***SPYRAL*** AND BEING A TEACHER AT ST. HADRIAN'S--THE PERSON SHE'D BEEN FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS...

I THINK--

I THINK SHE HAS A LOT ON HER MIND.

ST. HADRIAN'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, SECRET BASE OF SPYRAL, FORMER EMPLOYER OF DICK GRAYSON, AGENT 37. THREE DAYS AGO.
SOMETHING WRONG, LADIES?
MATRON BERTINELLI'S LATE FOR FITNESS PERIOD. JUST MAKING SURE SHE WASN'T KILLED BY AN ASSASSIN OR WHATNOT.
WE CAN HEAR HER IN THERE.
JANNI, BRYCE, PARIS...HEAD BACK TO CLASS AND GET READY. I'LL SEND HER YOUR WAY.
THANK YOU, SIR. BY THE WAY, WE'RE SAD TO SEE YOU GO.
WE'LL MISS YOUR TUMBLING INSTRUCTION.
WE'LL MISS JIM 'N' JUAN, MORE LIKE.
HELENA? ARE YOU OKAY? THE GIRLS ARE WAITING FOR YOU. AND EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT IN THE MOOD TO FACE THEM...
I'D-- I'D LIKE TO SEE YOU BEFORE I GO.
GIVE THE GIRLS MY SINCEREST APOLOGIES, "FORMER AGENT 37."
BERTINELLI CRIME FA
RESURGENT IN ROME
I'M FEELING A BIT UNDER THE WEATHER TODAY, AND I'M JUST NOT IN ANY MOOD...

...TO SHOW MY FACE.*
SICILY
When Helena first recruited me into Spyral, I thought she was cold, cruel and distant. I thought she was the enemy.
Funny how things change. How people grow on you. How people you couldn't stand...
*TO SEE HUNTRESS IN ACTION READ BATGIRL AND THE BIRDS OF PREY: REBIRTH #1 --TAY.

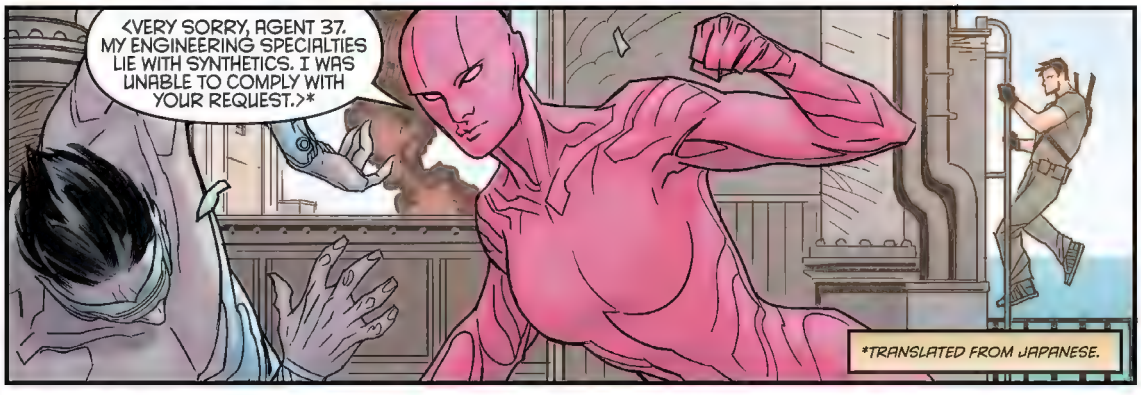
DOWNTOWN GOTHAM.
NOW.
...become your closest friends.
WELL, AS MUCH AS I ENJOY HAVING YOU AROUND TO WITNESS ME PILLAGE THE CHEDDARLANDS, I'LL ADMIT THAT I ARGUED AGAINST BRINGING YOU IN FROM THE COLD.
When I took on the mantle of Batman, Damian was my Robin. He was petulant, arrogant and difficult on his best days.
I loved him like a brother. I still do.
ARCADE
I--
Ungh.
DAMIAN?!
IT'S JUST EYESTRAIN, GRAYSON. STOP WORRYING. I AM A FOCUSED GAMER.
NOW, AS I WAS SAYING, I'M NOT CONVINCED SPYRAL ISN'T STILL HANGING ON TO THE TRUE IDENTITIES OF THE WORLD'S SUPERHERO POPULATION FOR NEFARIOUS PURPOSES.
I MADE SURE. BATMAN-SURE. ALL THOSE FILES WENT UP WHEN HELENA AND I BEAT DAEDALUS.
SPYRAL IS ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS NOW. WEIRD, MANIPULATIVE, MIND-DELUDING ANGELS.
MY OLD PARTNER, AGENT ONE, A.K.A. TIGER KING OF KANDAHAR, AND I HAD OUR DIFFERENCES...
WELL, BASICALLY ALL WE HAD WERE DIFFERENCES.
BUT, I'LL SLEEP ALL RIGHT KNOWING HE'S RUNNING THE SHOW.
AND NOW, IF SPYRAL WANTS TO FIND OUT WHO'S BEHIND A SUPERHERO'S MASK, THEY'LL HAVE TO DO WHAT THEY DID FOR ME.

"READ THEIR NAME OFF THEIR RÉSUMÉ."
H.I.V.E. EXPERIMENTAL WEAPONS PLATFORM.
OFF THE COAST OF FLORIDA.
TWO DAYS AGO.
SECURE THIS PLATFORM, YOU IDIOTS!

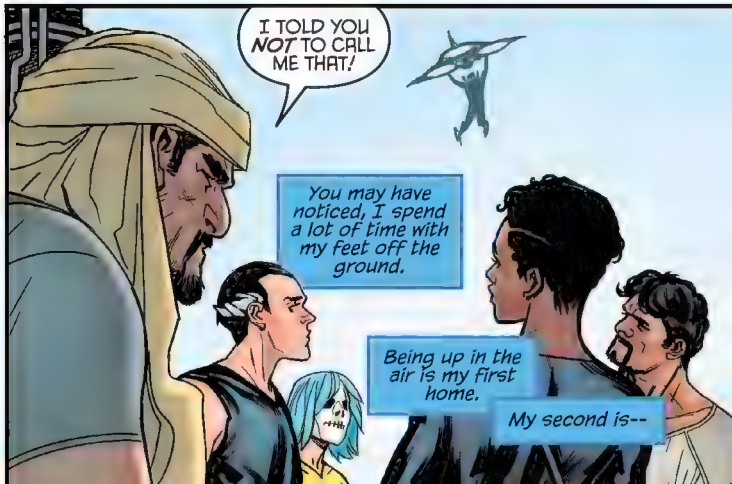
YOU ROOKIES ARE ALMOST AS *USELESS* AS AGENT 37!

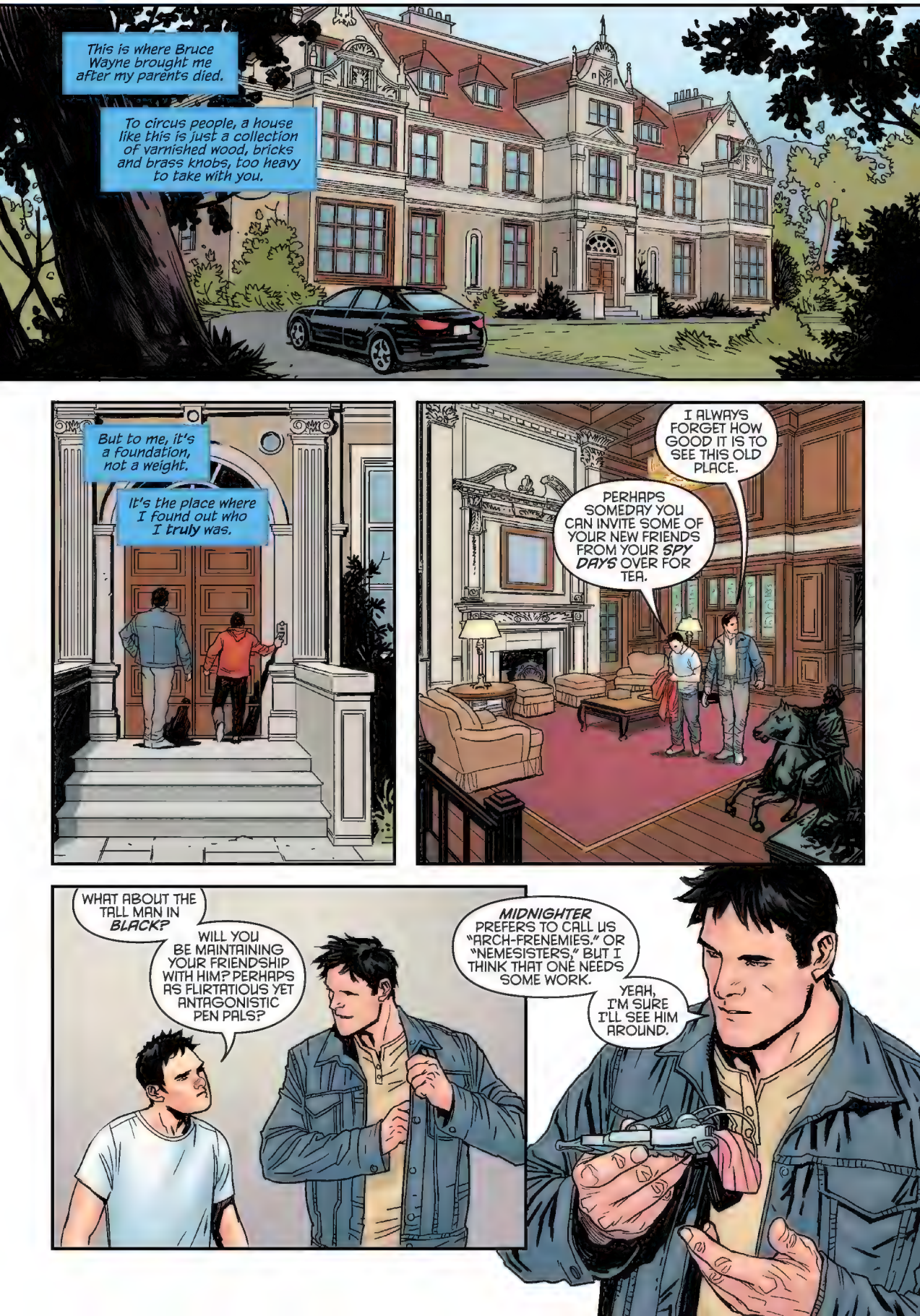
AW, THANKS, *TIGER.*
THOUGH I ALLOWED YOU ALONG ON THIS MISSION, GRAYSON--
--NEED I REMIND YOU THAT YOU ARE *NO LONGER* AN ACTIVE AGENT?

AND IT BREAKS YOUR HEART. BEFORE I GO--THE *DEVICE* I ASKED YOU ABOUT?
YES. DESPITE OWING YOU NOTHING, I DID COMMISSION *KESHI* TO LOOK INTO IT.


<VERY SORRY, AGENT 37. MY ENGINEERING SPECIALTIES LIE WITH SYNTHETICS. I WAS UNABLE TO COMPLY WITH YOUR REQUEST.>*
*TRANSLATED FROM JAPANESE.

THANKS ANYWAY.
WELL, I'VE GOT A FLIGHT TO CATCH.
I'LL MISS YOU GUYS. ESPECIALLY YOU, *TONY.*


I TOLD YOU *NOT* TO CALL ME THAT!
You may have noticed, I spend a lot of time with my feet off the ground.
Being up in the air is my first home.
My second is--


WAYNE MANOR.
NOW.
This is where Bruce Wayne brought me after my parents died.
To circus people, a house like this is just a collection of varnished wood, bricks and brass knobs, too heavy to take with you.
But to me, it's a foundation, not a weight.
It's the place where I found out who I truly was.
I ALWAYS FORGET HOW GOOD IT IS TO SEE THIS OLD PLACE.
PERHAPS SOMEDAY YOU CAN INVITE SOME OF YOUR NEW FRIENDS FROM YOUR SPY DAYS OVER FOR TEA.
WHAT ABOUT THE TALL MAN IN BLACK?
WILL YOU BE MAINTAINING YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH HIM? PERHAPS AS FLIRTATIOUS YET ANTAGONISTIC PEN PALS?
MIDNIGHTER PREFERS TO CALL US "ARCH-FRENEMIES." OR "NEMESISTERS," BUT I THINK THAT ONE NEEDS SOME WORK.
YEAH, I'M SURE I'LL SEE HIM AROUND.

"WE RUN IN SIMILAR CIRCLES."

SWISS ALPS. YESTERDAY.

"PROJECT: KILLICORN." YIKES. THEY AREN'T EVEN *TRYING* ANYMORE.

ANOTHER RENEGADE GENETICS EXPERIMENT FOILED, MIDNIGHTER. AND HE'S A BIG ONE. THE *GARDENER* SHOULD BE HAPPY, RIGHT?

THAT REMINDS ME. I WAS SUPPOSED TO BRING YOU SOMETHING. COME ON, I'LL GET IT FOR YA.

I'LL NEVER GET USED TO--

--THIS.

WELCOME BACK TO THE *GOD GARDEN.*

UF. BYE-BYE, BREFFAST.

I TELL YA, KILLICORN, THE KID CAN JUMP OFF THE WILLIS TOWER AND WORRY ABOUT A *NET* LATER, BUT ONE TRIP THROUGH THE DOOR AND HE'S ABOUT TO YELL AT THE FLOOR.

BLRRGH.

THE GARDENER WAS REAL PLEASED WITH YOU. THANKS TO YOUR INFO, WE'VE MANAGED TO RESCUE A WHOLE BUNCH OF NEW BIOTECH EXPERIMENTS.
IT WAS KISMET.
THE *JUSTICE LEAGUE* FIGHTS A FAIR AMOUNT OF MAD SCIENTISTS TRYING TO BUILD A BETTER MONSTER.
THEY WERE MORE THAN HAPPY TO FIND A PLACE FOR THESE THINGS TO GO.
GARDENER SAYS THIS'LL HELP THE *KID*. SO, IT'S BACK TO GOTHAM FOR YOU, *huh?*
YEAH. IT'S THE LAST STOP BEFORE MY NEXT GLOBE-TROTTING TOUR. TELL HER THANKS, 'NIGHTER.
I WILL. AND HEY, GRAYSON. IT'S BEEN FUN BEING YOUR "NEMESISTER."
NOW GO BACK TO BEING A *SUPERHERO*. YOU'RE TOO NICE FOR SPY WORK.
TSUCHIGUMO, BRO.
He's right. Lying, manipulation and duplicity aren't really my thing...

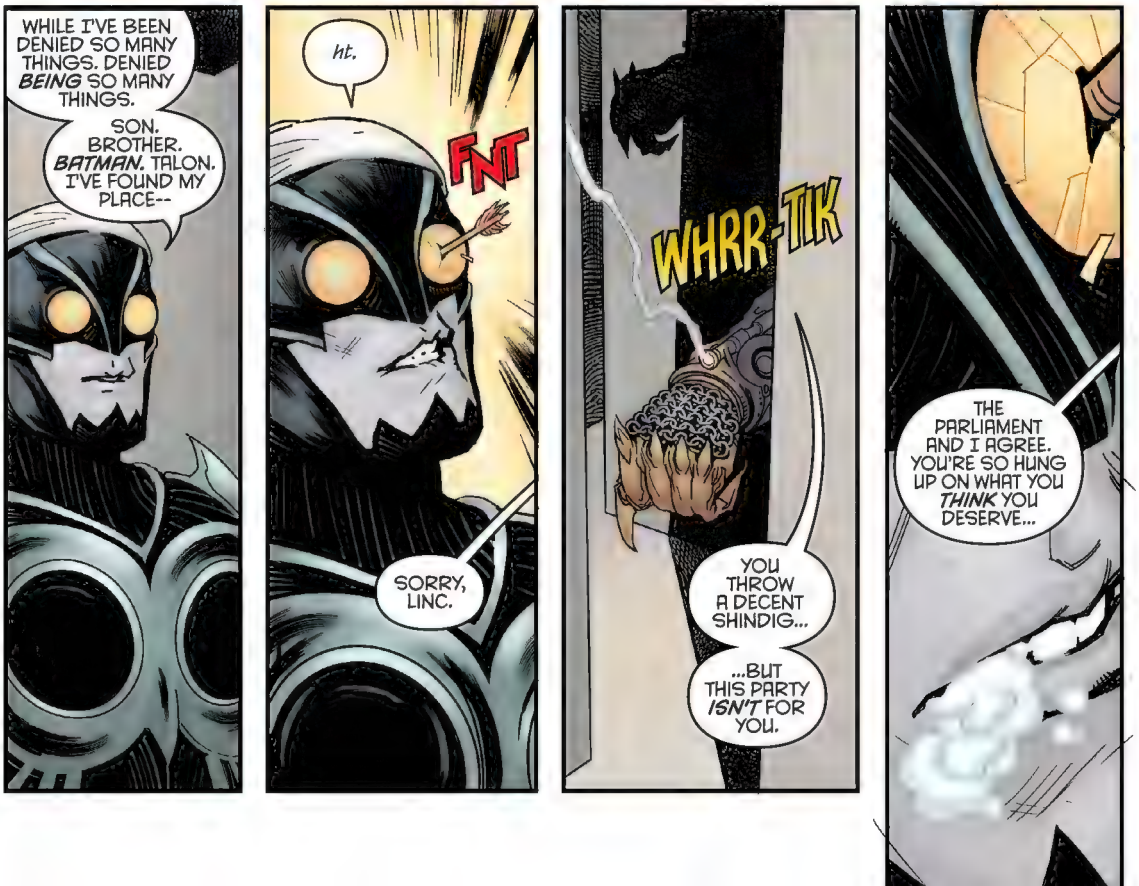
...well, except when they are.

THE BATCAVE.
NOW.
COME ON, DAMIAN. SIT STILL FOR ME. I TOOK YOU OUT FOR CHEESE VIKING.
I KNEW THIS WHOLE DAY WAS DISINGENUOUS! A DIRTY TRICK TO PACIFY ME THAT YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR PARENTS, GRAYSON!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DIDN'T TELL ME THE PARLIAMENT OF OWLS IMPLANTED A BOMB IN MY SKULL WHEN THEY TOOK OVER GOTHAM!
I KNOW YOU. YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO STOP PICKING. YOU CAN BARELY KEEP A FINGER OUT OF YOUR NOSE AS IS.
NOW PLEASE, MAN. JUST SIT STILL, AND TRUST ME.
OWWW!
I'VE GOT IT. IT WORKED.
I DEMAND ACTION FIGURES AND ICE CREAM FOR THAT EFFRONTERY!
DAMIAN.

WHAT. IS. GOING. ON.
BATMAN...
...THE GARDENER'S DEVICE WORKED. BETTER THAN ANYTHING CYBORG COULD HAVE MADE, EVEN.
YOU GOT THE EXPLOSIVES OUT?
WHAT?! YOU KNEW, TOO?! OUTRAGE!
THIS LITTLE CONTAINER HERE IS MADE WITH DAMIAN'S OWN DNA, SO AS FAR AS THE PARLIAMENT IS CONCERNED, THE BOMBS ARE STILL WHERE THEY PUT THEM.
BRUCE.
THE PARLIAMENT TRIED TO GET ME TO JOIN THEM BY GOING THROUGH DAMIAN. BY THREATENING HIS LIFE.
I'M SORRY.
I'VE FINALLY GOT YOU BACK, DICK. IF YOU THINK FOR A SECOND I'M ANGRY AT YOU FOR THIS, EVEN A LITTLE, THEN YOU'VE BEEN GONE FAR TOO LONG.
THE BLAME FOR THIS BEGINS WITH THE PARLIAMENT OF OWLS. AND IT ENDS WITH ONE MAN...

"...LINCOLN MARCH."
CHANIA, CRETE. GREECE.
TODAY.
WELCOME TO THE LABYRINTH!
GREEK LEGEND HOLDS THAT THE FIRST LABYRINTH WAS BUILT UPON THIS VERY ISLAND BY KING MINOS TO CONTAIN THE MISBEGOTTEN CHILD CALLED THE MINOTAUR.
TODAY IS THE DAY OF THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN. TODAY IS THE DAY OF THE PARLIAMENT OF OWLS!
WHILE THE COURT OF OWLS HIDES IN GOTHAM...
...WE WILL CREATE A WALLED HOMELAND HERE FOR THE ELITE, A CAPITOL OF THE NEW PLUTOCRACY...
...WHERE THE ARMS OF THE DESPERATE AND PATHETIC CANNOT REACH US.
ANY WHO STAND AGAINST US WILL FIND THEMSELVES THE TARGETS OF A NEW GENERATION OF SOLDIERS...
...LED AND TRAINED BY THE NIGHTWING OF GOTHAM, WHO HAS PLEDGED HIMSELF TO US.
WE ARE OUR OWN! BUT IF WE ARE TO BE THE NEW FACE OF GLOBAL ELITISM...

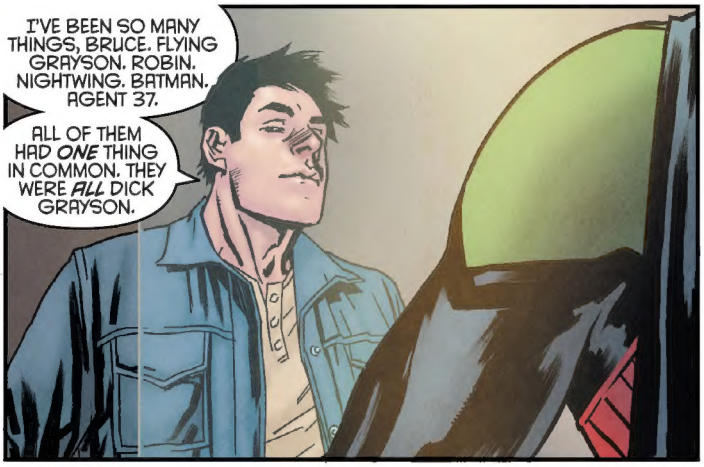
...THEN LET US CAST ASIDE THE WHITE *MASKS* OF OUR PREDECESSORS FROM *GOTHAM.*
WE WILL BE *MORE* INVISIBLE.
HIDDEN IN THE *SHADOWS.*

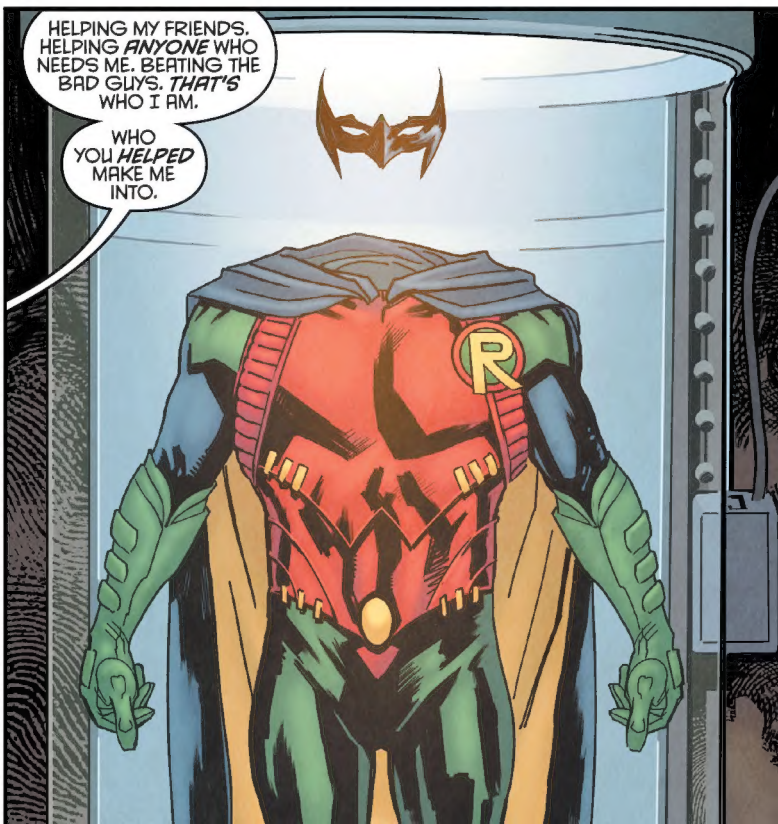

WHILE I'VE BEEN DENIED SO MANY THINGS. DENIED *BEING* SO MANY THINGS.
SON. BROTHER. *BATMAN.* TALON. I'VE FOUND MY PLACE--
ht.
FNT
SORRY, LINC.
WHRR-TIK
YOU THROW A DECENT SHINDIG...
...BUT THIS PARTY *ISN'T* FOR YOU.
THE PARLIAMENT AND I AGREE. YOU'RE SO HUNG UP ON WHAT YOU *THINK* YOU DESERVE...

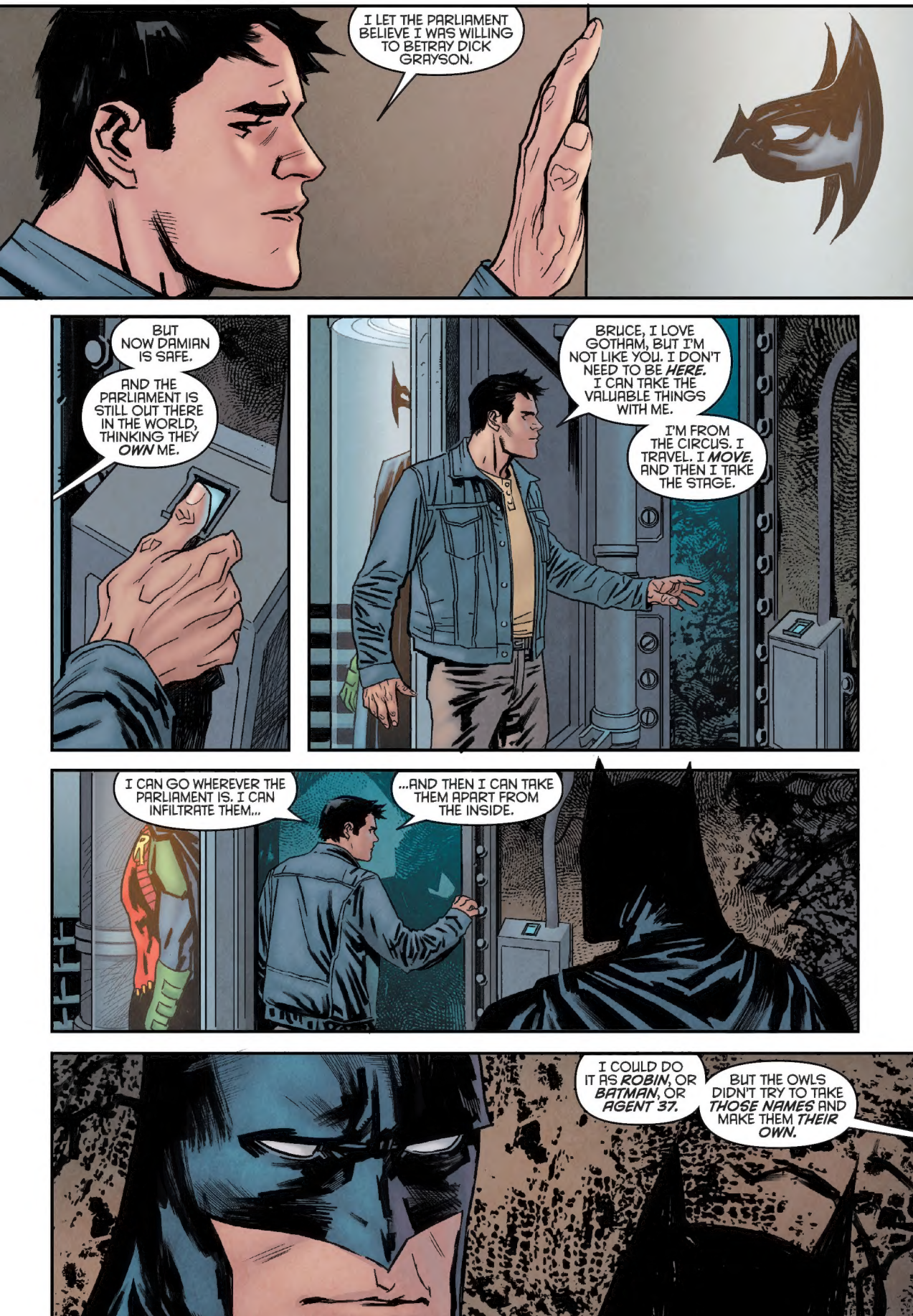
...THAT YOU KEEP GETTING IN YOUR OWN, AND EVERYONE ELSE'S WAY.
AND WHAT WE NEED? IS A NICE CLEAN PATH...
...TO NIGHTWING.
Staying the path. That's what this has always been about.

Balancing on a thin strip of light, surrounded by darkness.
For a second, I get to let my guard down. Breathe easy.
Before I step out again.
THE BATCAVE.
I'VE SENT DAMIAN ON A MISSION...TO THE ARCADE.
I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU, DICK. ALONE. I NEED TO KNOW...
...ARE YOU SURE THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT TO DO?

YOU JUST CAME HOME FROM ONE MISSION. YOU'VE JUST GOTTEN YOUR LIFE BACK. YOUR "SECRET IDENTITY."
YOU'VE BARELY HAD A CHANCE TO BE DICK GRAYSON.


I'VE BEEN SO MANY THINGS, BRUCE. FLYING GRAYSON. ROBIN. NIGHTWING. BATMAN. AGENT 37.
ALL OF THEM HAD ONE THING IN COMMON. THEY WERE ALL DICK GRAYSON.


HELPING MY FRIENDS. HELPING ANYONE WHO NEEDS ME. BEATING THE BAD GUYS. THAT'S WHO I AM.
WHO YOU HELPED MAKE ME INTO.


I LET THE PARLIAMENT BELIEVE I WAS WILLING TO BETRAY DICK GRAYSON.
BUT NOW DAMIAN IS SAFE.
AND THE PARLIAMENT IS STILL OUT THERE IN THE WORLD, THINKING THEY *OWN* ME.
BRUCE, I LOVE GOTHAM, BUT I'M NOT LIKE YOU. I DON'T NEED TO BE *HERE.* I CAN TAKE THE VALUABLE THINGS WITH ME.
I'M FROM THE CIRCUS. I TRAVEL. I *MOVE.* AND THEN I TAKE THE STAGE.
I CAN GO WHEREVER THE PARLIAMENT IS. I CAN INFILTRATE THEM...
...AND THEN I CAN TAKE THEM APART FROM THE INSIDE.
I COULD DO IT AS *ROBIN*, OR *BATMAN*, OR *AGENT 37.*
BUT THE OWLS DIDN'T TRY TO TAKE *THOSE NAMES* AND MAKE THEM *THEIR OWN.*

I'M GOING TO HELP MY FRIENDS. I'M GOING TO HELP ANYONE WHO NEEDS ME.
I'M GOING TO BEAT THE BAD GUYS.
AND I'M GOING TO DO IT AS...
The great rebuilder. The catalyst of change.
Eternally reborn to start anew.
...NIGHTWING.
NIGHTWING REBIRTH
TIM SEELEY WRITER YANICK PAQUETTE ARTIST NATHAN FAIRBAIRN COLORIST
CARLOS MANGUAL LETTERER JAVIER FERNÁNDEZ & CHRIS SOTOMAYOR COVER ARTISTS BABS TARR VARIANT COVER ARTIST
DAVE WIELGOSZ ASST. EDITOR REBECCA TAYLOR EDITOR MARK DOYLE GROUP EDITOR
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER · NIGHTWING CREATED BY MARV WOLFMAN & GEORGE PÉREZ
NEXT: NIGHTWING #1 THE BEGINNING OF... BETTER THAN BATMAN!

REMEMBER HIS NAME

"This isn't just another superhero comic; it's high-flying, unbridled fun with enough mystery peppered in to keep us coming back for more."

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The entire world is caught in a secret spiral of war and one man stands at the center... Dick Grayson.

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Dick Grayson's tenure at Spyral comes to a close in GRAYSON VOL. 5: SPIRAL'S END, by writers **TOM KING** (BATMAN), **TIM SEELEY** (NIGHTWING), **JACKSON LANZING** (BATMAN & ROBIN ETERNAL), **COLLIN KELLY** (BATMAN & ROBIN ETERNAL) and artist **ROGE ANTONIO** (THE JOKER: ENDGAME). Collects GRAYSON #17-20, GRAYSON ANNUAL #3 and a special sneak peek of NIGHTWING #1!

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